

THE
DARK BLUE.

DECEMBER, 1872.

GUSTAVUS THE THIRD OF SWEDEN;

OR,

THE STORY OF A KING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'JEW, GENTILE, AND CHRISTIAN.'

CHAPTER XII.

THE KING RECEIVES THE QUEEN'S LETTER.*

FINLAND lay in the depth of winter in snow and ice; the Gulf of Bothnia was coated with pieces of ice that drifted along like heavy masses of lead clashing against each other and making navigation dangerous. Commerce was stopped for a while, or at least carried on in a desultory manner; trades were dilatory, and the population rested partially on the work done in the summer months. Food had been got in where it possibly could be done for these weary winter days, and smoked fish, dried vegetables, a supply of oats for cakes, and barley for ale, formed the staple of supply. Of want and misery there were sufficient. Finland had been neglected: separated from Sweden proper by the Gulf it was the step-child of the realm, whose limbs had been torn asunder one by one, and absorbed by Russia. Catherine II. of Russia looked with greedy eyes at the last remnants of Sweden's supremacy here. What! a land so near to St. Petersburg—the memorable monument of the powerful Czar's prophetic power—to be governed by those weak-minded Vasas that had in later years scarcely known the value of their great ancestry? Nonsense; Finland *must* fall into Catherine's share; Finland *must* become Russian *in toto*; Finland, or the land to the east of Bothnia, must be Russian, and nothing else. So Catherine

* The letters are quoted from the originals.

kept her eye on that young monarch, who had shown a new spark of Vasa fire, who had imbibed determination from his Hohenzollern mother, had been trained exceedingly well by his tutors, and had gathered new ideas in his travels. New ideas, forsooth! In Catherine's mind there was but one idea: she had become a Russian; she had adopted Russian nationality, and that nationality should, under her reign, not suffer, but go on in its conquering and subduing process, till one day it fulfilled the great prophecy of Czar Peter himself!

Catherine was not a comfortable neighbour; she had all kinds of ugly ways to make havoc in the countries she meant to devour. She spread discontent and small troubles everywhere; she had her emissaries at work in town and village; she influenced the army and navy, and fostered that opposing spirit in the Swedish nobles that cost poor Gustavus so dear. For the moment, however, Catherine was wreathed in smiles. She had invited Gustavus to her capital, and he had promised to come, and if she *did* maintain a factious spirit all the time in Finland, what of that? All was fair in love and war, and war would surely come one day!

Finland was discontented; it began to think that there was finer food in the world than smoked fish and oaten-cakes, and smarter clothing than its friezes and linens. Finland did not like its swamps and barren districts and its heavy taxes; Finland wanted to be better off; and Finland grumbled. Gustavus saw he must go himself and look with his own eyes; that little book of the old tutor's letters was his mentor, and gave him a reflected image of a sovereign's duties. 'If thou art called a king, a ruler of multitudes, then be such in truth, and know their needs, their joys and sorrows, their hopes and fears; know that, being a king, thou art but a servant to thy people and God!' Gustavus meant to be such, and consequently went himself to Finland to learn what was wanted.

But the king was far too wary to let Catherine have the game to herself; he meant to look after his strongholds, after his fortresses, after his *friendly* safeguards against his neighbour of the tender sex; he meant to invigorate Finland and make it more loyal; he meant to spend months here, and checkmate Catherine's move. The royal party had arrived in mid-winter and taken the Finlanders by storm; they stared with their sleepy, cunning eyes to see the great Swedish king come and trouble about them. Those Finlanders were an odd race—suspicious, sluggardly, sly, dexterous; they did not move easily, but when moved, when excited, their enthusiasm knew no bounds, their courage no obstacles. The best word to be applied to them was that they were *tough* and *sure*.

Gustavus had travelled through a portion of his province—had

inspected fortifications, marshalled troops before him, had examined civil administration and investigated domestic matters; and Gustavus came to the result of such searching inquiries, 'That the provinces of an empire need the sovereign's or the executive's special examination to be justly administered. No deputy could do it, that no sovereign had a right to rest lazily on his *divine authority*, and no executive had a privilege to dictate at home to wants of which it knew and comprehended nothing. Each portion of a realm could demand to be judged by its own idiosyncrasy, given to it by its climate, its produce, and its geographical position.' Fatigued and weary, Gustavus and his party rested one night at a country inn near the little place of Vasa. Forts had been inspected near the coast, and Russian probabilities had been discussed; but no one had thought that there existed something in the world which could overturn thrones, demolish dynasties, turn the scale of the fate of nations, and bring about sudden results that had seemed to require months to be developed. It was but a little word, with a mighty power—'love'—that *will* obtrude itself into the concerns of men, and bend all that come under its sway to its own devices.

There is something in giving the details of real incidents, in depicting that which has actually taken place, and in placing before the eyes of the public the hidden motives that actuated, and the palpable feelings that swayed, the souls of men and women who lived our life and bore its vicissitudes like ourselves. That night's rest of King Gustavus was vividly described by his noble counsellor, Baron Scheffer, to the Countess Fersen, the young Queen's principal *dame d'honneur*; and from his letter the following account is faithfully given.

The royal party had made themselves as comfortable as they could in the country inn; after the plain evening meal a confidential conversation had taken place, the chess-board had been fetched, and the King had had one of his favourite games with young Rosenstein. Papers and drawings lay about the table, and officers surrounded it, when suddenly a courier from Stockholm was announced. He was led in, and reported that he brought letters from various members of the royal family, and one in particular from the Queen, enveloped in another from the Duchess of Suedermania.

The bag was opened, and the King took the Duchess's letter first. 'I,' said Baron Scheffer, in his letter to Countess Fersen, 'had witnessed the opening of letters from the same great person before, and I was not at that moment prepared for any great emotion; on the contrary, I had observed an earnestness in the first breaking of the seal turn afterwards to cold chagrin and visible disappointment.' As the King this time ran hastily over the Duchess's short letter, he repeated

to himself, '*really* from the Queen!' with emphasis; his eyes brightened, a glowing colour mounted to his face, he became breathless with impatience as he hurriedly read on, and starting up from his posture, he pushed against the chess-board, sent it flying to the other end of the room, and by his brusque movement put out one of the boards. He then called out that there were no lights in the room, and looking angrily at us, as if we were the cause of all this confusion, went into the next room. We heard him move about restlessly, and saw him return with a face radiant with delight. He noticed the smile on all our faces, and said, as if in explanation of his excitement, 'Gentlemen, if I could believe my eyes, I should be tempted to think that the Queen really loves me.' Young Rosenstein, blushing as red as a rose, went straight up to his master and ventured to say boldly, 'Did your Majesty never know that before?' The King, rather confused, said, that he had supposed otherwise, that he had believed he had not been so happy as to gain his wife's affection; and the young champion, who had once been page in the Queen's household, again held forth, 'Your Majesty will permit me to say, that I could not doubt my own observation, which was strengthened by the communication of a relation of mine in constant attendance on the Queen; I will pledge my life, sire, that the Queen loves you as tenderly as you deserve.' The King was beside himself; he, always so reserved, positively hugged the noble youth in his delight. When he could speak he assured him of his friendship and protection, with tears in his eyes, and this feeling becoming general, my amiable pupil the King, was so overwhelmed by our dumb but evident sympathy, that he retired to his own department.

After a time he called me and handed me the Queen's letter.

'There,' he said, 'peruse this, and tell me how this has been kept from me. This delicate letter, expressing so charmingly the Queen's solicitude for my health, is very different from those stiff epistles that I received formerly. It is the Queen's own hand, and I see actually several words scratched over, as if she had written in the strictest confidence.' 'Show me the letter, your Majesty,' I answered. The King handed me the letter, and on the instant a thought struck me. 'Have these letters not been copied generally by her Majesty's confidential attendant, Madame Halme? And is she not very much opposed to your Majesty's person? Is there not reason for doubting her?' 'I have it!' cried the King. 'Let a courier prepare instantly to depart—this very hour, and take back my letter to the Queen. That vile woman copied the letters, and transposed the meaning of the words.' 'Really, your Majesty,' I replied, 'to send off a courier this boisterous evening seems terrible. Could it not be delayed till the

morning? He would scarcely go far during these few hours.' 'Very well, Scheffer,' replied the King; 'then let it be at early dawn.'

I do not think our Sovereign slept much that night. I heard his quick step in my room, and since then his manner is hurried; there is impatience in his movements. He hastens the inspection, and is settling Finland's concerns with a decision astonishing in him. Evidently the fortune of Rosenstein is made. The King does not allow him out of his sight, and calls him his young hero, who spoke out bravely for his noble mistress while she was suffering under a cloud of unmerited neglect!

'And you, my dear friend,' concluded Baron Scheffer, in his letter—'you will rejoice at this good news. There have been many enemies to the happiness of our noble King and Queen, and, not the least, a great lady who poisoned her son's mind against his wife. Ah! had the King but been open with me on the subject matters might have gone differently. I do not think we shall be long in Finland; sweet ties draw us home. May I beg of you to let me know how our gracious Queen bears this welcome news?'

The night which Baron Scheffer said was passed restlessly by the King after the receipt of his wife's letter, waned; Gustavus had again and again perused that epistle; traces of tears were on his cheeks. How could he account for having let that young girl, who had obeyed his call and left her home-circle for him, sit in her apartments of the palace, and pass her time scarcely noticed by him? His society had never cheered her, his arm never supported her; they had been separated from the very time of the wedding; an unaccountable gulf of distance had come between them from the beginning, and he now knew that he had neglected the very first duties of a husband. It was a bitter cup for Gustavus, who *meant* to do his duty in life. Had there been any other image that put his wife's in the background? Before him rose the stately figure of Christina Eckermann, as she had waved the band, as she had accepted the laurel-wreath, as she had given life to his literary efforts. Tauntingly the image looked at him, as if it had had a share in his heart, as if it had somewhat obtruded itself between him and his wife. His hand held the letter firmer; no! he felt it. Christina had had his admiration, almost his gratitude, but no other feeling had darkened his friendship for her, and even in *thought* he had not sinned.

Christina could not make his heart flutter as did that irregular handwriting—grand, silent, and noble *she* was there, a real dramatic impersonation, while Magdalena, with all her shy ways, appeared like a weak tendril winding herself round every fibre of his heart.

'Oh, my beloved! he exclaimed to himself, that I should have

ignored this for years and exposed thee to neglect and reproach; oh! let me again peruse some of these tender lines.'

'SIRE,—Ever tenderly anxious for the health of my Sovereign, I fear I did not sufficiently join in praises at his undertaking this journey—(how timidly she speaks of herself to my heart!)—it is more gratifying to behold my King occasionally; and nothing is more soothing to my ear than to catch broken sentences of his discourse while he addresses those around him. I do not justify this selfish sensation. I ought to regard the true welfare of the kingdom; but the harmony of my lord's voice, the fire of his eye, and the grace of every sentence he utters, are dearer to me. Happy am I when I behold him. I am afraid my Sovereign has not enjoyed good health; his eye's lustre seemed not so bright when I saw him, and that last glance is still on my mind. How I dreaded that voyage; but have I not a billet announcing his safe arrival, and asking for one in return? and but for this journey I might not have enjoyed the opportunity to express my feelings. Oh! when in his presence, my eyes are painfully cast on the ground and my heart trembles. Could he have seen the interior of this poor weak heart, and known that he is its absolute sovereign! But whither goes my heart? It proffers no claim, it submits to destiny—(my poor, poor wife, murmured the King, while his hand trembled!)—may a merciful Providence preserve the most valuable of men, and may a second courier return to tell us that our Sovereign will come back in health to grace the Court of Sweden as its brightest ornament.'

'The Duchess of Suedermania ran into my cabinet and asked impatiently for my letter. She is now watching to draw it from me and put it in hers.

'I can only subscribe myself, Sire, your faithful

'MAGDALENA.'

By this time, as the King had read these sentences—reading many inaudibly—tears could no longer be repressed. 'Gustavus, while thou mean'st to do thy duty to the utmost, thou didst neglect that nearest to thee. How was it possible to grieve such a gentle disposition by cold neglect? but dawn is approaching; let me answer the letter—how shall I find words to express myself?' The King sat down, and drew to himself the writing materials that were his constant companions.

'MY DEAREST QUEEN,—Do not my eyes deceive me? These sweet, tender expressions of anxious solicitude from my Queen—my wife? Am I awake? I seem roused from a long and comfortless dream to hopes of happiness, never enjoyed. Where have I

existed for ages to be ignorant of the real feelings of my lovely Princess—not to have recognized her modest regard? Perhaps I was too eager! When I first beheld her I acknowledged myself captive to her charms, and I ought to have waited till I had assured myself of hers; but I turned away, believing myself to be treated with coldness.

‘Why those other formal letters? I die to know their cause. Could I but fly this instant! Were it not for my imperious duty, I should come at once. Oh, this distance, this terrible journey! impetuous fool as I am—but for this journey and this accident I should never have become happy. A tolerable article it would make for the future chronicler: “That his Majesty had been separated from his young Queen by coldness and estrangement—that he had gone to Finland on a tour of inspection, found out his error, rushed home to entreat the Queen’s pardon, and returned back to his duties with equal speed.”

‘Forward me, adored Princess, another packet; send another courier the moment this one arrives—do not detain him; let the letter not be short. This happiness is so new it almost overpowers me. Adieu! my Princess, my Queen and Empress! May this opening bud of joy blossom for our future happiness, and may my Queen be assured for ever of the devotion of her erring

‘GUSTAVUS.’

The King laid his head in very weariness of excited emotion on his arm; he felt exhausted by this new, this delicious feeling. He was beloved, tenderly beloved by her whom he had never called wife—by her who would in future reign paramount in his heart, and allow no other image to darken that sweet, ingenuous face of hers. Scheffer found him, when he came to fetch the letter, asleep in the same sitting posture.

* * * * *

The young Queen was revenged; the look given to Christina had been one of admiration, that cast upon *her* letter was one of ‘love.’

CHAPTER XIII.

RECONCILIATION.

THE Queen was listlessly sitting in her boudoir. Though Gustavus had never shared his life with her, still she knew him to be there, to be a star in the Court-firmament, that would protect her if necessary.

Now there was no star to be even looked at respectfully; the Queen-mother hated her and kept her at a distance; the unscrupulous members of the Court shunned her; and the few that surrounded her seemed even now to forsake her. Countess Fersen had been away a few days, the Duchess had one of her fits of despondency, and Magdalena sat in her gorgeous room more unhappy than the Swedish fish-woman, who passed outside the palace gates to take her wares to the market for sale. Without Gustavus there were no festivities, there was no pleasure at Court, and whether Magdalena would or not, she *had* listened a little to Madame Halme's words, and she no longer enjoyed Christina's representations as she had done; there was just a tinge of jealousy—though, be it said to the young Queen's honour, she thought Christina incapable of a culpable action. Madame Halme, with her stoic countenance, entered.

'A courier, your Majesty, has just arrived from Finland; he has orders to deliver his letters only to your Majesty, and is immediately to send off another. I am not thought worthy to bring his Majesty's letter to my royal mistress.'

The Queen sprang up. 'Is the King ill? What is the matter? Oh, bring him in quickly!'

'Most likely all this fuss will concern the play-actress,' grumbled the Danish woman.

Booted and spurred, and covered with stray flakes of snow, the officer was led in by the page in attendance.

'Your Majesty, it is the King's desire that I give my despatches only into your hands; the King hopes a courier will at once be sent back with an answer.'

'Tell me, is your Sovereign ill?'

'Oh, no, your Majesty, the King was never better in his life; I had my orders from his Majesty direct, and the King looked exceedingly well.'

What can it mean? The Queen opened the bag herself, beckoning Madame Halme aside, and took out her own parcel. She opened her husband's letter. She ran over the first lines: was it possible? The first words of love from him, after years of marriage, of wrong borne without a complaint, of hopeless despondency. She read on: every tender expression seemed fourfold so to her—her adoring Gustavus—her devoted husband. Magdalena forgot Madame Halme and the courier, and, with a great overwhelming cry of joy, she threw herself on her knees, and broke into short sobs: 'Oh, God be thanked, it has come; my prayer has been heard; oh! this joy—can I bear it?' A few moments later she recovered herself; she rose, cast a disdainful glance on Madame Halme, and, drawing herself up, handed the bag

back to the courier with more dignity than she had ever shown. The royal husband's protection already told on her; in some seconds she had become more like a Queen than she had ever been during years.

The courier was dismissed, imploring the Queen to send off at once another messenger, as these were the King's express orders. Trembling and nervous, Magdalena sat down to pen her second epistle to her lord, and this time the pen flew over the paper, and there were scarcely any erasures. As Madame Halme approached to take the letter for copying it, the Queen impatiently waved her back.

'No,' she said, 'the King, my husband, is satisfied with my scrawl and my erasures; let him have his way. Let me see you in an hour in my cabinet. Leave me now.'

Madame Halme moved stiffly away: had the day of retribution come?

The courier was gone, the second letter had been dispatched, and the Queen nerved herself for an unpleasant duty. Madame Halme attended her, as desired, in her cabinet, and the soft, pliant Magdalena, who had never been able to oppose anybody, had suddenly become determined and resolute.

The conversation between them was sharp. The Danish woman owned that she had transposed the sense of the Queen's letters to her husband; that she had done so because she considered the Queen's expressions of affection to a man who had shown so little regard for her undignified, and had meant to keep up a proper pride towards these frivolous Swedish people. She hated them all, and only wished she had never left Copenhagen.

The Queen was incensed that her attendant should have ventured to interfere in so delicate a matter, and most abruptly dismissed her at once; she must go back to Copenhagen forthwith, before the King returned from Finland, as it could not be foreseen how he might punish such vile acts.

'And me, your Majesty dismisses in that way? Me, who attended on you from earliest girlhood—who surrounded you with care—had ever a watchful eye on you, and never allowed your Majesty's name to be mentioned but with respect by your attendants? Me, who only wanted to keep up a proper standing opposite this false monarch and his unbearing mother?'

'Woman, you took too much upon yourself. I begin to understand that had the King known of my sincere affection for him, we should long have been happy.'

'I am ashamed at your Majesty's want of pride: you never were taught this at your Majesty's father's court; and I would not stay in

a place where royal dignity seems cast to the winds before any designing woman of the stage !'

The Queen felt the sting.

'Never appear again before me, madam. Your salary shall be handed to you by my secretary, and your letter of congé written. It is terrible to imagine that you dared to interfere between the life-happiness of two human beings—your own Sovereigns.'

The Queen hid her face in very agony of pain, and pointed to the door; once more the stubborn woman attempted to remonstrate, and then with a jerk left the room; within a few hours she left the palace and Stockholm for ever.

When Countess Fersen, who had suddenly arrived, saw her royal lady an hour after, and received from her lips the announcement of the good news, she was astonished to observe the mighty change this dream of coming happiness had already wrought in the Queen—how different was her carriage, how bright her smile; and when she spoke of Madame Halme's treachery, how dignified and determined her countenance !

* * * * *

But a short time elapsed, and Finland's affairs were settled; couriers had kept up a continuous intercourse, and the announcement of the King's return threw the whole capital into excitement. Something had oozed out that a happy turn had occurred to conjugal affairs at the palace, and the people, who esteemed and loved both their Sovereigns, meant to express their joy right loyally.

Magdalena became more and more restless as the time of the King's arrival approached; those around her began to dread the moment when the young wife, so long ignored, should behold her husband; all kinds of schemes how to break the intense excitement and lessen the danger, that the Queen might not succumb to it, were afloat. Finally, the Duchess of Suedermania, who was supremely happy at the result of her *ruse* and embraced her sister-in-law a hundred times in the day, decided the matter; *she* would be near the Queen, and she would ward off the probable danger of the meeting.

The great day came; it was over; and when the lively little Duchess had herself recovered from the shock and become tranquil, she penned the following epistle to her own lord, who was away in Gothland :—

'MY DEAREST HUSBAND,—Rejoice with us all, my friend, at the happy reunion of the two most excellent persons in the kingdom. The heartfelt joy, the glow of delight, that seem to pervade every corner of the Court, cannot be easily expressed. Ought not you, who

are so closely allied by blood and affection to this amiable prince, to be an early partaker of his joy? And should not she who ought and does delight to communicate to her *graceless* partner (the little word would intrude) every pure and virtuous joy, to be the first to convey this welcome intelligence? Of the happy explanation in Finland you are already informed; the return of the King was announced on Monday, for the following day. Such was the state of anxious and trembling expectation of my fair sister during the whole of that day that I really feared for the ultimate effect on her delicate and sensible frame when the moment of arrival should come. I continued with her, at her desire, chatting and jesting upon common matters, to draw off her attention from the one idea which occupied her mind. Orders had been issued for every public demonstration of joy to be exhibited in the capital upon the return of its monarch. The whole town was illuminated at an early hour; the streets were crowded with expecting spectators, to the no small hindrance of his Majesty's progress. About eight o'clock, his arrival in the castle-yard was announced by the band striking up our favourite national air. The Queen appeared ready to sink; I cheered and supported her. Your beloved brother entered in his quickest step; his Princess rose to meet him, but sank again on the sofa. The King was at her feet. "Oh! rise, rise," she sobbed out, and, leaning her head on his shoulder, was supported by his encircling arms. "She is safe," thought I, "when words and tears find their way;" and I glided out of the room, to give relief to my own emotions, and leave them to the undisturbed enjoyment of the finest feelings the heart can prove—mutual reconciliation and renewed affection. A low, continued conversation soon convinced me they were both alive; and in less than an hour the door opened and your amiable brother led me in, affectionately embraced me, and, placing me on the sofa, seated himself between us. How touching were his expressions of gratitude to me for the little sally that had produced the happy discovery! The evening closed with a repast only shared by us three, Countess Fersen and the excellent Scheffer and the King led the Queen later to the state-apartments, which they will occupy for some time. When shall I behold the partner of my life? when shall I be able to show him that, tiresome and faithless as he is, I shall always keep for him the regard of a loving and affectionate wife?

‘SUEDERMANIA.’

The day after Gustavus' arrival a solemn service at the Cathedral was held to return thanks to God for the return of the King, who was present at it, leading his Queen up the aisle, for the first time since their marriage, years ago. Festivities followed—balls, concerts, state

dinners, dramatic representations, at which the Queen Dowager did not appear, and to the latter of which there was only one drawback—the young, admired actress, Christina Eckermann did not assist at them, for she was tossing wildly on her bed in heavy sickness, and in the throes of a violent and dangerous brain fever.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHRISTINA RECEIVES A SHOCK.

CHRISTINA ECKERMANN had lived in a dream, in a great vast soul-dream of her own; withdrawing herself from ordinary mortals, she had indulged this dream, till its dim outlines had almost become a certainty to her, till its sweet whisperings had appeared a reality, and its lotus-like narcotic influence had benumbed her fresh reasoning powers, lulling them into a nervous condition of helplessness. Christina was under a spell; her strong honest nature was not yet warped, but her ideas had become untrue on one object, and there was danger that that object might engross her imagination till she beheld through its hazy hues the world only in the object—the world as naught, the object as all. Blessed is the girl who can at such a time, when all that inner loving impulse opens, like the shut calyx of the blossoming natural flower—blessed is the girl who can lay her head on a mother's, a sister's, or a friend's lap, and tell by the glance of her upturned eye that it has come, this heavenly call of 'love,' that the girlish mind might be too yielding to understand the holy lesson, and might bend under an unholy power. If, when the first faint blush of love's sympathetic touch tinges the girl's cheek, she can seek the supporting strength of a good woman's hand, there is hope that the touch may become the firm life-grasp of worthy affection; or, should it have settled on the wrong object, be gently drawn off without danger. But if these early natural imaginings have no guiding trellis to wind their tendrils on, it becomes a chance whether they will seek the right height, or—to the grief of weeping angels—fall to the ground, and trail their soiled leaves in the moral dust of this life's unhallowed callousness. Oh, to have the love of woman recognised as what it is in truth, in reality, in humanity, in Divine godliness and spirituality, the most sacred, life-giving feeling on earth, the highest impulse existing under the sun, the most poetic aspiration of humankind—as yet but too often the most tainted, sullied, lost and forlorn spark of Divine life here below!

Christina felt the heavy burden felt by all women who really love—earlier or later; for her the sun was not so bright, nor the white crispy snow so white, nor the clear sky so blue, nor the view over the Mälär lake so grand as for others. Nature had lost intensity for her, and nothing but the indulgence of fancy could satisfy her constant craving for meditation. Whole hours she sat at her window, with her books on her knee, watching the skaters below, drifting back in thought to Tjörn, to that happy, happy time caressing her father, taunting Ulrica, and carrying her memory forward to that day when she saw the King pass before the balcony; to her first performance as Ebba Brahe; to the King's letter—ah, did it ever leave her; to his chivalrous protection later; to the enormous flattery bestowed upon her everywhere; to Rosenstein's constant affection, and to the dark future. It seemed dark to her; her soul would not wing up into the ethereal regions of hope; it dwelt below in the dark cavern of doubt, and nursed sullenly the gloomy foreboding of a sad end.

Her mother's fate, her father's name, Ulrica's whereabouts, had gone down into the cavern with her, and she had no wish to draw them to light; why, forsooth? Knowledge would not benefit her now, for darkness enveloped every future step of her existence. Where was Ulrica? Her healthful nature might have done something. Ulrica, in searching for the footprints of the dead was losing the path of the living, and believed Christina sufficiently strong to keep the right way, for all that theatrical stuff, as she had termed her artistic aspirations.

Christina lived in her dream; any sudden shock would be a rude awakening, a terrible reminder that there was something wrong in this same dream.

'Tell Christina I have got some news for her,' said Captain Liljehorn to his sister. The Captain cynically nursed his knee as he sat down by the wood-fire.

Christina appeared. Really the girl was so grand, so beautiful, so utterly out of keeping with the female forms that surrounded him daily, that the Captain started; should he drive the dagger into her heart, and thereby awaken the slumbering embers of but half-understood yearning into the bright flame of certain love? Even he hesitated, even he held back, but the devil's impulse drove him on; fate must be fulfilled, and if he had found Christina's nature above being bent to his own desires, at least it should be crushed some other way.

'There is good news abroad, Christina; the town whispers that the long estrangement between the King and his wife has had a happy solution—that the King thought the Queen did not love him,

and had proudly avoided her society. It is all out that Magdalena has the liveliest affection for Gustavus; he is enchanted at it, and will soon be back, perhaps to-day. There will be grand rejoicings, and *you*, Christina, will have to play unhappy Ebba Brahe before the royal couple.' The Captain leeringly watched her like the cat does the mouse.

Her frame quivered as with an electrical shock: she sat down.

'Really? I am very glad,' she answered.

'Are you sure, Christina?' drawled the Captain.

'Why not, sir? Am I the person to wish husband and wife not to meet and be happy?' retorted Christina, red with anger.

'Not when you think of yourself!'

'Captain, what do you mean?'

'Shall I tell?'

'No, no, no, you hideous man: what will you of me, to drive me to madness—to lose my self-respect? What have I done; to you, you miscreant, that you should harrow me thus?'

'What a fury, what a fuss! I have said nothing. But if there were not something, you, sweet coz, would not be so dreadfully excited. Shall I speak and tell you? do you not know it yourself? Heavens! what a grand real queen you would make! rather more than that pretty, weeping milksop, our Magdalena.'

Christina sprang up; every maidenly nerve vibrated at this rude man's touch; she confronted him like a young tigress defending herself from his venomous serpent hisses, trying to hide that which had been untold in the innermost recesses of her heart, unknown to herself.

'Captain, Captain, beware! if you insult me you play with fire; one more word and I strike you as a coward, having no one to defend me here.'

'Do—o—o—do now, sweet coz; it would be charming; shall I tell? shall I suggest? Christina Eckermann *you love the King.*' The Captain rose, and stared at her with the bold insolence of an unscrupulous man.

'It is false! take that!' and she struck him a passionate blow on his cheek.

His cheek flamed; he had almost retorted, but he recollected himself.

'How charming, sweet coz; it doesn't alter the fact, and I am so glad that you have given me something to think of—some injury to remember—some day.'

Shouts rent the air. The proclamation was being read, by a Herald on horseback, that his Majesty would return next Monday,

and that all good citizens should show their loyalty by their rejoicings.

They listened to the tumult, to the Herald's clear voice. Christina stood quite still, her eyes staring into vacancy, her hands tightly compressed; slowly the lids of her eyes drooped; slowly, slowly, there crept forth from them a burning, scalding tear: it fell down on her hand; she felt its scorching touch, and turned quietly and majestically to leave the room—fire in her heart, grief in her soul.

'The fiery she-devil,' growled the Captain after her. 'But the game is not played out yet, madam, and it *shall* be, some day. Funny she staid here so long.'

Christina appeared at table some hours afterwards; she was pale, but collected and civil to the Captain. Whatever had taken place in her room, she showed no outward signs of it; her conversation was somewhat constrained, and a peculiarly hard look was in her eyes, else the surface was equable and calm. So it remained; Christina followed her usual occupations daily, with one exception; she meditated no more, as if she dreaded to be left long alone.

Every hour brought more news about the royal couple, about the rejoicings, about the coming festivities. At last, Monday came; the night drew near, crowds perambulated the streets, crowds pressed on, crowds shouted; the bells rang, the air trembled with sound-waves—closer and closer they were borne to Christina's ear: one cannon-shot, and Christina knew that the King was at home in the castle, embracing his wife. She wavered not—innocence sat proudly on her brow; she did not even struggle—she was still good, brave, noble Christina Eckermann, for all that man's tempting accusations.

A carriage drove furiously to the door; some one ran into the house, and, bright and joyous, young Rosenstein rushed into the room.

'Here I am, Mademoiselle Christine—couldn't wait to be announced. Did you hear them, the people? Only think, Christine, Mademoiselle Christine, it was *my* doing. I brought them together. Are you not happy about it, here? Are you ill, Mademoiselle? How pale you look!'

Christina smiled and held out her hand:

'No, no, Count Rosenstein; I am quite well if I am pale, and very content at the new happiness of the royal couple.'

'Very,' chimed in the Captain, 'so are we all. Now do, Rosenstein, tell us all about it.'

'If Mademoiselle wishes?' Christina nodded; Rosenstein looked at her: 'How dull you are!'

'Am I? but I do not know it; pardon me.'

'Cousin Christina is dull sometimes *now*,' drawled the Captain, emphasising the 'now.' But Christina heeded it not.

'Go on, Count Rosenstein,' said Christina, quietly.

'What is the matter with you all? I was so happy to come; I actually drove here in the carriage that brought me, Scheffer, and the King. His Majesty permitted me, and sent his best greetings, hoping to see Mademoiselle soon with the Queen in the palace.'

'Really!' said the Captain, 'how thoughtful; happy people are always thoughtful!'

'You are, dear Count Rosenstein,' said Christina, very gently—so gently that the youth drew closer to her, and looked into her face with beaming eyes.

'Now you are getting amiable,' he said; then he recounted in glowing terms the whole scene in Finland, and its consequences. Evidently all this had taken a load off his mind. He thought Christina safe and out of danger, and hoped for something, he knew scarcely what; perhaps that Christina would love him as he loved her—with all his soul.

Little by little, Christina had become paler; the Captain's watchful eye was on her. He passed round towards her, and when Rosenstein, forgetful of all around him, had finished his tale, the Captain was just in time to allow Christina's fainting form to fall into his arms.

'Captain, what is it?' cried the youth. 'Who has hurt her?'

'No one, Rosenstein. Call my sister and the servant.'

'No; I will not leave her.'

'Not? It is dangerous—she is rigid!'

The Captain shouted; Rosenstein was on his knees before Christina. The women ran in, and all was confusion, till the young girl had been put to bed, had revived a little, and the doctor had arrived.

Then Rosenstein, who had wildly walked up and down the room, sat down, and, placing his arms on the table, he laid his head down on them, and sobbed like a big, broken-hearted school-boy, or like a true, trusty man who knows some great grief is waiting for him in the distance.

CHAPTER XV.

ROSENSTEIN OFFERS MARRIAGE.

NATURE had exhausted her own strength in Christina. The brain-pressure upon the young girl had been great, living as she did among discordant influences, borne down by the continual cynicism of the Captain, the cat-like watching of his sister, and uplifted again beyond

measure by her own artistic aspirations. Nature passed through a struggle, and Christina lay next day in the wild paroxysms of brain-fever—gasping for breath, fighting for the very light of reason, and approaching the gates of death, while she snatched at life.

The news of Christina's illness spread like wild-fire over the town; by mid-day it was known at the palace and at the principal places of public resort that the beautiful young actress was dangerously ill. Many smiled as if they knew the cause, others but shrugged their shoulders, and among the court-throng young Rosenstein, grieved to the heart, could hardly help calling out half-a-dozen sneerers to fight a duel. The King was much concerned when he heard of Christina's illness; he sent to the Queen's apartment to inform her of it, and both sovereigns wished to expedite a messenger for inquiries at Captain Liljehorn's residence.

'No need to inquire, sire,' said Rosenstein; 'I have been there three times this morning.' The young man spoke gruffly, forgetting half his usual respect.

'What is the matter with you, Rosenstein?' asked the King.

'Sire, Mademoiselle Christine is in danger; I cannot bear it.'

'Oh, that's it, Rosenstein; let us hope her vigorous youth will overcome it, and then we'll consult together, you and I—we shall see.'

'Oh, there is no hope that way for me, if she does get well; she will but look upon me as her boy-brother.'

'Not much of a boy, that stalwart form.'

'She does not even notice that, your Majesty,' said Rosenstein; 'if there were any hope, only a spark, I should like to fan it into a flame; but first I want to ask something of you, sire.'

'What is it?'

'You look so happy to-day, sire; you said you would be ever my friend for the help I have given to clear this misunderstanding. Can your Majesty forget that I am a subject, and a very young one, and will your Majesty look upon me as a fellow-man, and answer me a question out-right?'

'I will, Rosenstein.'

'Have you ever (Rosenstein dropped the Majesty, and went close up to the King, not speaking offensively, but harshly), have you ever spoken to Christina Eckermann of love?'

The King started and grew angry. 'Rosenstein, you, almost a boy, say that to me to-day, on my wedding-morn? Shame, young man, to insult your Sovereign, when he cannot punish you.'

'Pardon, pardon, your Majesty! your word is sufficient; your look is. I thought so—only the evil in me would doubt. Pardon again your Majesty.'

Rosenstein ventured to take the King's hand and kissed it.

The King held him gently to him. 'Poor jealous boy! fear not me; fear rather others. Christina's nature is truly noble, and I wish you were older to protect it from an unhallowed touch; do your best to protect her now, for noble natures once wounded are often over sensitive, and prone to become vascillating.'

'Thanks, your Majesty, may I go now? You will not want me to-day, sire?'

'No, no; I am ready for the service in the Cathedral, and am only sorry you will not be there.'

'Present my humble homage to Her Majesty, and believe me, sire, I shall pray earnestly for the happiness of my Sovereigns elsewhere—where I can be near *her*, my own beloved Christina.'

Half-an-hour later Rosenstein sat in Captain Liljehorn's sitting-room, and patiently watched for news from the sick chamber; weeks he sat so, spending here every spare hour, divided in body and soul by the duty he owed to his Sovereign and to his adored Christina.

* * * * *

Young Spring, the favourite child of nature, was gambolling in frolicsome mood over the northern lands. The keen air of Scandinavia sent the child bounding over the fields, meadows, meres, and lakes of the Swedish peninsula; with its gladsome touch it brought forth under its footprint the yellow buttercup and white daisy, the pale green grass blade and sprouting trefoil, the tender leaflet and delicate early blossom. The land swam in refreshing hues, the sea revelled in bluish tints, and the sky vaulted up high into the white cloud-masses of the purest atmosphere. The very strength of the child's life showed itself everywhere; it wanted to be doing, creating, reviving, and clothing mother earth in such youthful dress as should proclaim its bright, happy, joyous existence.

All Stockholm began to throw off its wintry guise; the ice disappeared, the snow melted from housetop and church-tower, and trade and commerce became released from wintry bonds. Stretching its limbs once more for a happy renewal of strength, the northern earth was rejuvenescent everywhere, proclaiming far and wide that in its womb rested the creative essences for endless times to come!

* * * * *

A pale, dainty girl sat at a window overlooking the Mälar Lake. Her delicate colour showed that she had just risen from a long illness; her short-cut hair proved that her brain had needed a cooling and refreshing process; her warm dress pointed to convalescence only. Christina Eckermann, inexpressibly lovely in her weakness, cast her

glance over that scene of renewed life below that had been her favourite resort ever since she came to Stockholm.

Near her stood a vase of flowers; next to her lay innumerable pretty notes, saying how glad people were that Stockholm would soon again see its brightest star on the artistic horizon and once more revel in the impersonation of Sweden's historical characters. The King had not had one of his plays performed during Christina's illness; out of respect for her talent and genius the dramatic oars had rested, and only secondary pieces had been performed at the court theatre. Great was the joy at the young heroine's recovery, and greater the expectation to see her once more as Ebba Brahe; to hear again the clear accents of her voice, and pass with her through the various phases of love, hope, joy, despair, and renunciation.

Christina, however, thought little of her dramatic career; the spark of ambition seemed to have died out in her. Her brain sought still for rest and repose, and had not even the power to form a renewed plan; the scene of actual life below had for the moment more attraction for her than all the blazing lights of the theatre, the acclamations of the audience, and the approving smile of the Sovereign. Surely Christina had passed over a great gulf, and the very effort to pass it had purified her being in a higher degree, and had cast off every selfish desire.

A comely woman entered the room: it was Ulrica. Somehow she had found her way quickly to the house, when the news of Christina's illness had spread abroad: where she had been and how she had heard of it she confided to no one, but there she was, ready to nurse 'her child,' as she called Christina. And she had nursed her to good purpose; without Ulrica's ever-watchful, motherly care, Christina had never again sat at that window, overlooking the Mälar Lake!

'My child, young Rosenstein is below; you know he was promised to see you to-day. Will you go to him?'

Christina rose; her slender figure bent like the elastic willow branches over the lake.

'I will, dear Ulrica. Give me my shawl.'

'Take care, child; do not excite yourself.'

'Oh, no; Rosenstein has been so good—so like a real brother—I must keep my promise.'

Ulrica smiled, doubtfully, at the word *brother*.

'Well, well,' she said, as Ulrica left the room; 'poor children, they do not know better.'

He heard her step, still a little unsteady, and his heart bounded within him. At the door he stood, and as she came towards him, he

grasped her hand; he covered it respectfully with kisses, and big, scalding tear-drops fell on it.

‘Rosenstein, my brother, you must be good; I am not very strong yet, and must remain quiet.’

For answer she had a glance of such heavenly joy as only angels grant to man. Then she noticed how pale, how much older, he looked.

‘Have you been ill too, Rosenstein?’

‘No, no; not really, only sympathetically; did you think, Christina—may I call you so now?—did—did you think I should not suffer when you did?’

‘Poor boy, I am very sorry.’

‘Christine, I am not a boy now; don’t call me so.’

For answer, she just passed her hand over his hair, as he sat below her. He looked up, his eyes swimming with delight.

‘The King and Queen send you a spring bouquet and their best congratulations.’

‘How good they are!’

‘They are very happy together, Christina, and when good people are happy they like to see others so.’

‘Do you think so? now, I should have thought happiness made people selfish. If I were happy, Rosenstein, I should like to lock it up in my own breast.’

‘And if I were so, I should like to shout out to all the world. I am happy, now, to see you again my orphan-sister, for remember we are both orphans, and I could trumpet it out to all the world, like the herald did the King’s arrival. Are you not happy, Christina? May I—oh! may I, try to make you so?’

‘But, dear Rosenstein, you are making me happy.’

‘Not in the right way, Christina; I want to make you as happy as I am.’

‘As happy as you are, Rosenstein; I don’t know what that means—my nature is different. I must not talk and think too much, else my head will begin to ache.’

Rosenstein answered not; he was still; he took her poor wan hand and held it, and so they sat for some time, not a word passing between them. At last, Rosenstein could bear it no longer; he put his cheek against her hand, and whispered, as if to himself:

‘Christine, can you never love me otherwise than as a brother? can you never, never, never look upon me as a lover, a—a—husband, a—somebody to support you, to cherish you, to lead you through life? Oh, Christine! could you give up your dramatic career for me?’ He felt how her hand trembled.

‘Rosenstein, do not ask me; my brain is so tired still, I cannot tell what I shall do.’

‘Can you not promise?’

She looked at him.

‘Hush, brother; over my heart angels’ wings have passed; they have purified it, for, without my knowing, something wrong had crept into it, I believe. Oh, let me gain strength, let me gain life and health, and I will tell you, I will try to see what I can do.’

‘Christina, then, I am lost; only from your weakness have I hope—your strength I dread; in it you rise above me.’

‘But I promise to love you always, always as my dear own brother.’

‘I could curse the word, as Cain did.’

‘Rosenstein!’

‘Christina, you are cruel; for you are killing me.’

‘And you are making me feel very ill.’

‘Oh, forgive me! I had better die than do that. Will you promise nothing?’

‘Rosenstein, I need not promise; I love you as my own, my dearest brother—as the brightest ray in my life now, as the ray I could not bear to lose.’ She placed her hand in his.

‘I suppose I must be content with that,’ he answered, mournfully; ‘oh, Christina, have you an idea what I have suffered?’ He looked at her with an agonizing look.

‘I think I have,’ she said, slowly and quietly; and returning his look, she pressed her cold lips on his forehead.

He quivered under the touch, bent low, and covered again her hand with kisses, for he dared not venture to rob those lips of one kiss. So they sat for some time till others came into the room, smiling at the orphan couple.

JUST PRINCIPLES OF PUNISHMENT.

BY FRANCIS PEEK.

II.

THE foundation of all just punishment rests upon the principle of justice—strict justice—neither respecting the person of the poor nor honouring the person of the mighty. With justice in this sense mercy must never interfere, inasmuch as to tamper with it, from any consideration whatever, would be fatal to its very existence. Let even pity influence the scales, and it is justice no longer. Justice, however, *includes* mercy, and in the struggle between society and the criminal it must take up a position from which it can give due weight to the demands of society which has been injured, and at the same time take into account the circumstances of the wrongdoer. A few striking facts will illustrate this. Out of every hundred criminals, thirty-four could neither read nor write, and only three-and-a-half per cent. could read and write well. In the Government report for last month, we find the following:—‘It is painful to have to say that it is to parental neglect that by far the larger share of the grosser crimes of the present day is to be attributed. In London alone, many thousands of children are trained to thieving, dragged-up to manhood from the guilt-gardens of our great towns.’

It follows from these and similar facts that every principle of punishment that does not include mercy is unjust and cruel, while justice itself demands that, when the law has been vindicated, the nature of all punishments inflicted should be remedial and restorative; that furthermore every effort should be made to reform the criminal and to enable him to return to the community not only morally changed, but with the power of maintaining himself by honest means.

In discussing the reformation of criminals it will be necessary to examine into the causes of the crimes that are committed against society, and we shall find that the principal agent in such crimes is

either passion or covetousness. The former includes all crimes against the person, from that of murder to that of common assault where property is not so much the object but rather the gratification of cruelty, lust, or revenge; the latter includes all crimes, whether accompanied or unaccompanied by personal violence, in which the aim is to obtain the property of another. It is evident on the slightest consideration that these two classes of crimes require for their treatment a very different mode of punishment, if our criminal legislation is to be both just and remedial. Crimes of passion are of course of very unequal degrees of guilt. There are those committed in the haste of the moment, under circumstances of great provocation or temptation, and those which are perpetrated systematically or in deliberate malice.

With regard to the former we may say that justice is, on the whole, fairly administered; but when we come to crimes of malicious passion, such as assaults on wives, children, and helpless dependants, or planned attacks upon masters, fellow-workmen, and police, the case is totally different. With respect to these latter the administration of justice as well as the law itself is degraded by the inadequacy of the punishment inflicted by which no just principle whatever is satisfied. There is no retribution in the three or six months' imprisonment to which a wretch, who has nearly kicked a helpless woman to death, is condemned, nor is the deterrent principle answered any better by such light sentences. Once let the brutal portion of the community become possessed of the idea that the law lightly esteems personal security, that it counts it a greater crime to steal a few shillings than to injure a fellow-creature so long as serious consequences do not almost instantly result and, as might be expected, such offences are encouraged; and the daily police reports prove their disastrous increase.

We shall make but small progress in just principles of punishment until we entirely reverse our present ideas which have been fostered by the remnants of feudal law, according to which a man's property was more sacred than his person. It is absolutely necessary at the present time, by more stringent laws and sterner administration, to make it known that the first object of good government is the protection of the person; that he who deliberately injures another will himself have to suffer some pain similar to that which he has inflicted, and that, furthermore, he will not be permitted to mix again with the community till his savage nature has been tamed by solitary confinement and remedial treatment.

Whilst our punishments for crimes against the person are miserably weak, those for crimes against property are often equally harsh or cruel, and, in some cases, most unwise, as witness the treadmill and

the convict-gang system. The treadmill is not only unwise but unjust. Unjust because the old offenders and the strong find it comparatively easy, while the weakly either suffer most disproportionately, often meeting with severe accidents,* or escape altogether, being reported by the surgeon as physically unfit to undergo the punishment.† Unwise, because its tendency is quite the reverse of remedial. If the desire of the community was to make labour utterly distasteful, no surer means could have been devised than the monotonous, heavy, useless wheel. Its effect was fairly expressed by a prisoner, who on leaving gaol said, 'Well! I never loved work, but I hate it more now than ever.' How contrary to such barbarous and useless treatment is that which a just principle of punishment would dictate, and which our 'Old Book' prescribes: 'If a thief be taken let him make restitution.' Say to such a one—'You will have to remain in prison till you have repaid what you have stolen, as well as the cost of your living.' Let this be more firmly enforced; let the rogue and vagabond be made to feel that he must work, whether he be in prison or at liberty, and we shall need no treadmill, crank, or other barbarism.

Lest the idea of making thieves support themselves and repay their theft should appear chimerical, several prisons may be quoted as having been made partly or wholly self-supporting, and in some cases even remunerative. One of the chief prisons in the United States contributes £5000 a-year to the revenue, besides being self-supporting, while the Philadelphia City Prison is nearly so. In England, the results in different prisons are very suggestive of the imperfect way in which we are working. Thus in Stafford Gaol, the earnings are £5 for each prisoner per annum; in Wakefield Gaol, £7; and the average cost to the community of each criminal is about £32 per annum. In Rutland County Gaol, each prisoner costs £125 a-year, and earns nothing. How patient are English taxpayers!

There is no great difficulty in making criminals self-supporting to a very considerable extent, provided intelligent, earnest men are placed at the head of prisons, and the effect may be aptly illustrated by the following anecdote. A prisoner was receiving his discharge from the governor, who had during his incarceration enforced hard remunerative occupation, and now, on leaving, explained his reasons for doing so. 'Do you mean to say,' said the prisoner, 'that I have earned so much towards your salary?' 'Yes,' replied the governor; 'you have earned for the gaol nearly double the cost of your keep, and so much for me for keeping you at work.' 'Then you shall *never* see me here again'

* Twelve such accidents were recently reported to have happened in one gaol.

† About 20 per cent. of all condemned to the treadmill.

was the disgusted man's answer. There can be no doubt but that criminals reflect with a sort of savage satisfaction that at present they are making the community pay heavily for keeping them shut up.

Another most important point in the remedial treatment of prisoners is to keep them absolutely separate. In this our present mode of action is very strange. Our convicts are first subjected to solitary confinement for nine months and then are thrown together in gangs where every corruption festers and gangrenes among the whole mass. We find the same evil to some extent in many county gaols, where the prisoners work together in large rooms, and in spite of every precaution communicate with one another.

For purposes of reformation total seclusion from other prisoners is of primary importance. We do not advocate the fearful silent system, but rather one which would give every facility to persons of good character to visit criminals. Solitary confinement opens the ground, but human sympathy must put in the seed. Above all, the criminal must be kept away from pernicious contact with other criminals if that good seed is to have any chance of growth.

We noticed in a former article how public opinion has fluctuated, now leaning to extreme harshness now to excessive lenity. It is sad to see how rapidly similar transitions take place in all matters in this country. A short time ago our poor were being demoralised by the abundance of so-called charity; now, because certain classes of workmen have naturally raised prices by striking, comfortable cynics deny that there are any poor left to require help at all.

Not long since a popular novelist ridiculed the morbid feeling which felt no pity except for the convicted criminal, and then made him an object of envy to the honest poor. Now, the public mind can hardly be persuaded that crimes against society are sufficiently punished, although in one convict prison (Chatham) out of 1692 prisoners 487 met with accidents, and 24 mutilated themselves to obtain some relief, while 1725 admissions were granted to the hospital. Alas! that the hour should still seem distant when the glorious truth shall be thoroughly understood that the one thing for which all creation is groaning is Justice. Justice from the strong to the weak; from the rich to the poor and from the poor to the rich. Justice from the well-educated, well-trained Pharisee to the child of shame, bred in an atmosphere where wrong is counted right, and right is scorned. Justice, whose essence is 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye so to them likewise.'

A SAND QUARRY IN WINTER.

BY THE REV. J. G. WOOD, M.A., F.L.S., &c.

THE end of November, 6.30 a.m. Wet, wet, wet! Thermometer 34 deg. A fierce wind blowing somewhere from the northwards, howling and shrieking through the trees, and, as can be seen even at that hour, tearing off the leaves that still keep their hold on the branches, whirling them high in air, and mixing them with the already fallen leaves which have been swept up from the ground, and tower upwards in spiral eddies before they again fall to the earth. No moon: the sun is not due yet, but he is trying hard to drive a few pale, watery beams through the dull, leaden, black-patched canopy, which does duty for a sky; and, as the eye becomes more accustomed to the semi-darkness, a few large snow-flakes are seen here and there amid all the flying leaves. The sash is opened for a better glance of the sky, and in rushes the triumphant wind, sending all my papers flying helter-skelter about the room, and causing great confusion among the multitudinous savage weapons, implements, and ornaments with which the walls of the room are covered. The house is situated on the top of a hill, so that the wind does pretty well as it likes, especially at this time of year when the foliage is off the protecting belt of trees in front, and nothing is left but their bare branches. Clearly, this is a day for home-work, for avoidance of the elements, and for cheerful fires in defiance of the colliers.

A letter from the editor, urgently requesting an article at once, because the Magazine has to go to press so early in November. I had looked forward to a nice bright December day for this task—one of the many wintry days when the sun shines clearly, though coldly; when the sky is blue, when scarcely but the slightest breeze is perceptible, and when the exhilarating bracing atmosphere almost takes away the sense of cold. Moreover, I had intended to write an article entitled, 'Under the Ground,' as a companion to 'Under the Bark,' but the perpetual rains of the last two or three months have rendered

such a task all but useless. There are hundreds of insects which pass their winter time some few inches below the surface of the earth, and I had thought of taking a limited area, digging it carefully, and jotting down the results; but there is nothing which does so much damage to most insects as wet. Cold they can bear well enough, provided they are not exposed directly to the elements, but wet is more than they can endure, and fairly drowns them, and it is for that reason that insects are often so rare after a very wet autumn.

Surely no one could be expected to go out in such weather and dig for insects; and if he were rash enough to do so, the chances are that no sooner did he uncover an insect than it would be blown far out of his reach. At last I bethought myself of a small, sheltered Sand Quarry, about half-a-mile from my house, and, taking with me the old familiar butcher's knife in its sheath, and some boxes, I started for the quarry.

When I visited the place in July last, it was a most lovely little spot, clothed with abundant verdure, rich in the sweet flowers of glorious summer, and musical with the twitter of joyous birds and the hum of many insects. The sky was serene and blue, with a few white clouds drifting slowly across its azure expanse, and sending their shadows travelling over the plain below. The Thames ran, a meandering blue streak, glittering here and there as the sunbeams glanced on its ripples, and bearing many a white sail and swift steamer through the valley over which it had once spread itself like a shallow lake until restrained within its limits by the mighty 'river-wall,' on which the seaweed dangles in black and green clusters.

Now, how changed is all the scene! The quarry itself is tolerably sheltered, but above our heads the wind tears its way through the wood and speeds over the country as if it meant to twist every tree up by the roots. Every now and then, as some fiercer gust passes along, a loud ruffling sound is heard, accompanied by a pattering as of hail, among the withered leaves that strew the ground. At first, indeed, I took it to be hail, but presently found that it was caused by the little hard seeds of the broom, which clung somewhat loosely to their opened and twisted pods, and were shaken out by the wind. All the broom trees above had lost their seeds long ago, but these still survived in that partly sheltered spot. The rustling sound was produced by a young sycamore tree. All the leaves had been blown off it except one large leaf at the end of each twig. These clung pertinaciously to their hold, and the noise which they made was really wonderful.

No longer bright and glittering, the Thames, a dull grey stream, reflected the dull grey and leaden sky, through which no ray of sunshine could pass, and over which the black snow clouds sped with ominous

rapidity. Not a sail visible, and only an occasional empty screw-collier, very much down at the stern, and her 'nose tip-tilted' as if disgusted with things in general. Far away on either side lie the marshes as they are still called—'the meshes' according to aboriginal pronunciation—and on the left is the identical 'mesh' where Pip encountered his grateful convict, and nearly met his death in the hut by the lime kiln. Not many years ago the bittern haunted these marshes, but its weird, booming cry has never been heard since the marshes were drained and cultivated. For all that may be seen now the bittern might yet be there, and a more forlorn looking place can hardly be imagined than that dim, misty expanse with the river winding through it, and closed in the distance by the black, tree-topped Essex hills.

As to the wind, it seems scarcely to have made up its mind what to do, or by what name it was to be called, whether Boreas, Septembrio, or Thracias. It is only determined on two points—the one, that the north should be the leading element, and the other that it had to blow its hardest.

It is quite a relief to turn into the quarry, as into harbour out of a rough sea, and to be free from that bitter, searching wind which takes away the breath when faced, and, when the back is turned, seems to force its way through all apparel as easily as if the thick overcoat were little more than chain armour. Here in the quarry, what a change is there! A few flowers still linger in this sheltered spot. The yellow ragwort is plentiful, and a few purple mallow flowers are visible among the green leaves. The soil, however, does not seem to be kindly for mallow, as the leaves, though numerous, are scarcely larger than penny-pieces; the plant crouches closely to the ground, and the flowers, instead of flaunting some three feet in the air, upborne by a stem like a walking-stick, are nestled among the leaves, and almost hidden by them. Richer colouring than the mallow is, however, there. The entrance to the quarry opens into 'Ragged Robin Lane,' and there, on the spot where the southern sunbeams can warm and the north wind cannot touch, is Ragged Robin himself, with just one or two rosy flowers yet unfaded. I suppose that the flower has held its own because, owing to its situation, nearly at the foot of a hill, the bottom of the quarry is always moist, and whatever warmth there may be it is sure to get. And in the middle of the quarry stands a solitary oat plant, tall, fair, and strong, its leaves broad and healthy, and its graceful pendulous spikelets waving gently in the slight breeze that can find its way into the quarry.

Thick and dank lie the fallen leaves, coloured with the yet unfaded reds and browns and yellows of autumn. Without moving I can

note sycamore, maple, oak, Spanish chestnut, horse chestnut, beech, birch, elm, and ash. It is worthy of notice to remark how capricious are the trees in retaining or parting with their leafage, and how, when two trees of the same species stand near each other, one will be entirely bare, while the other will be half clad with fairly green leaves. This difference is evidently to be attributed to the particular soil into which the chief roots of the tree have penetrated.

The soil in this spot is exceedingly varied, all sorts of strata turning up close to each other. For example, the eastern and southern sides of this quarry are soft, friable sand, whereas the western side is rough conglomerate. Of the latter material, indeed, our hill is mostly composed. It is very healthy, no doubt, and has the advantage of creating scarcely any mud, so that, even after a long and steady rain, a lady can safely walk in the roads, provided that her boots be reasonably stout.

Still, it has its disadvantages. The ground does well enough for trees and even shrubs, but it renders floriculture a heart-breaking business. Only the thinnest and poorest layer of soil lies on it, and even if abundant mould be added, the first heavy rain washes it all away, and a fine crop of loose stones comes to the surface. As for turf, it will not live on such a soil, but becomes covered with moss, and gradually dies off. After some ten years' experience, I have at last induced a lawn to exist; but then I had to dig away some eighteen inches of rubbish, put down a layer of good soil, then a thick layer of chalk, and then another of marl. Chalk absorbs water like a sponge, so that it retains the water which otherwise would have run to waste, and gives it out slowly to the roots of the grass in the dry weather.

Another disadvantage of such a soil is the abundance of pebbles, varying in size from a cherry to a plum, and nicely rounded for throwing. Consequently the boys, with whom this place abounds, and who, boy-like, are mostly at war with each other, and always with the rest of mankind, find themselves amply provided with weapons ready to hand. In the autumn, when the chestnuts are ripe, it is scarcely safe to turn a corner, or even to go near one, so perpetual is the fire that is kept up at the trees and between rival parties of boys.

The perpendicular sides of the quarry show this arrangement of strata very plainly. It is curious to see how the roots of the trees have restricted themselves to the shallow stratum of soil, so that they run almost horizontally. As the rain and wind beat away the upper portion of the quarry, the earth falls away from the roots, which hang down, waving loosely in the air; so when the strong wind attacks them they lash

about like ships, and cut large semicircular grooves in the sand-wall against which they are blown.

Some trees seem to be little affected by this falling away of the soil. The elder, for example, retains its leaves bravely, and in one part has formed quite a rampart against the wind; so does the blackberry; while the elms are entirely stripped, the rooks' nests coming out black against the grey sky, whilst even the oaks have parted with their leaves, contrary to their usual custom of keeping them, though withered, until they are pushed off by the young foliage of the following spring.

In July last, among the many insects which thronged the quarry, I was greatly struck with the number of sand-boring and parasitic insects that buzzed about its eastern face, and so thought that such a day as this would afford a good opportunity for digging into the bank and seeing what the insects had done.

Even the face of the quarry has undergone a great change since July, not by the hand of man, but by natural means. The rains of many consecutive weeks have been dashed against it, run down it, and cut it into multitudinous meandering channels, while at the bottom of the quarry is a large heap of mud, composed of the soil and sand which have been washed down. Indeed, the view of the quarry showed admirably, on a small scale, how vast a work water does in changing the face of the earth. The strangest point about this channelled surface was the formation of numerous stalactites and stalagmites. A stalactite of sand seems rather a strange thing, but there they are, and plenty of them. They are, of course, but small, only a few inches in length; but size goes for very little in Nature, and, when compared with the area of the whole globe, there is not very much difference between six inches and six feet. They fall to pieces at the slightest touch of the finger, and yet remain unhurt while the tempestuous wind is roaring above, and the air is full of heavy rain, whirling leaves and bits of dry branches.

A portion of the eastern face has escaped rather better than the rest, and to that I directed my attention. It was literally covered with burrows, varying in size from eighteen inches to the eighth of an inch in diameter. The small burrows are evidently owing to the insects which were so plentiful in the summer. Chief among them were the Kentish bee (*Andrena pilipes*), a very local insect, hardly to be found in any other county of England except that from which it takes its name; the Sand-wasps (*Crabro* and *Odynerus*), and the lovely Ruby-tail flies (*Chrysis*), about all of whom we shall presently learn something.

The largest is that of a fox, and a very clever contrivance it is.

After much search on the hill from which the quarry is cut, I found the other opening of the burrow. It is situated on the side of the hill, shaded by grass and bracken, and is so carefully concealed that, although I knew it must be situated within a limited area, I had some difficulty in finding it. Should the fox be run to earth, he would take refuge in this burrow, crawl by its means through the hill, slip down the face of the quarry, and be off to some other place of concealment. There are plenty of rabbit burrows; two of which are so close to each other as to bear a curious resemblance to the Thames Tunnel, especially as the rain has washed away the sand around them, so as to form a sort of arched recess, in which the two openings are seen side by side. Above them, and not far beneath the layer of soil, are a number of the sand-martin's burrows, now of course deserted, their inhabitants being in climates where they are certainly warmer, and, I hope, drier, than they would be here.

There are one or two mouse-holes; but these are of no consequence, and we proceed to those of the insects. First in size comes that of the Kentish bee. It is really a curious little insect. It bores horizontal tunnels some seven or eight inches in depth, each tunnel being about large enough to admit a common drawing-pencil. The insect itself would scarcely be recognised by those who had only seen specimens in a cabinet. Such specimens appear in their natural colours, *i.e.*, entirely black, while the bee, as it flies to its burrow, is entirely white. The fact is, that in its state of grubdom, the young bee feeds on the pollen of the thistle. The mother bee, after finishing her burrow, goes off to the fields, carrying away a quantity of the required pollen, and places it at the end of the burrow, together with the egg from which the future bee will emerge. The pollen being quite white, the bee is covered with it, just as a miller is covered with flour, so that she is quite metamorphosed for the time.

The sand being soft can easily be cut away with the knife, and, a grass-stem having been previously introduced into the burrow, there is no great difficulty in tracing it to the end. Sometimes, however, a large piece of sand breaks away and falls, carrying with it the whole of the burrow and the grass-stem. At the end of the burrow may be found, at the proper time of year, the cocoon containing the bee-grub, and if it be carefully removed and placed in a box, the bee itself will make its appearance in due time. I have hatched out plenty of Kentish bees in this way. Although so local, it is a very common insect in this part of the country, where the soil is favourable. I am quite sure that, contrary to the habits of most insects, the Kentish bee has vastly increased in numbers since Kent was brought into the high state of cultivation which distinguishes the 'Garden of England.'

Before man brought his hand to bear upon the soil, the Kentish bee must have been sorely troubled to find a suitable place for its burrows. Sand very seldom forms itself into natural banks, and it is very rarely the case that a gulf is cut through the sand by the action of water, so as to leave a perpendicular bank on either side. Now, as the Kentish bee makes horizontal and not vertical burrows, it is evident that in the days when England was in the hands of savages, who made no roads and built no houses, the Kentish bee must have been much fewer in numbers. But, now-a-days, roads are cut through the sand-hills, and the sides of the cutting are filled with the bees' burrows. Sand, too, is urgently wanted both for building and agricultural purposes, and consequently almost every sand-hill has its quarry. It is most interesting in the bright summer time to watch these places, and see the white throng of Kentish bees flying into and out of their burrows, and making the air musical with their busy hum.

In the particular quarry of which I am writing, the Kentish bee has restricted itself to the upper portion of the sand, so that its tunnels cannot be reached without much difficulty. The lower part is occupied by the small burrows of the sand-wasp, which are placed so closely together that the face of the quarry looks very much as if it had sustained a series of volleys of No. 7 shot. Not exactly so; for in one place there actually is a group of shot-holes round the entrance of a rabbit-burrow, the gun having evidently been fired at the animal as it was making its escape. Shot holes differ from those of the sand-wasps in this respect. The latter are quite circular, and their entrance is no larger than the diameter of the burrow itself, while the former are irregularly conical, the blow of the shot having always broken away a quantity of the friable sand. Not a single shot remains in any of the many holes, the heavy leaden pellets having all rolled out of their conical beds.

To trace up the burrow of the sand-wasp is a difficult task. I find that the best plan is to select a spot about a foot square, in which the burrows are very numerous, and then to pare away the sand in thin slices. If this be done neatly and carefully, the whole of the burrow can be laid open from mouth to end. Mostly they run horizontally, like those of the Kentish bee, being driven at right angles to the face of the sand-bank, but some of them make a sudden curve, when they have gone a few inches into the sand, run for a little distance parallel with the quarry face, and then resume their former direction.

Suddenly we come upon a small lump of something black and fluffy, looking much as if a small pinch of black cloth teasings had been rolled into a little cylinder and pushed to the bottom of the tunnel. We care-

fully get it out with the point of a penknife, and slip it into a box, so as to prevent it from being blown away by the wind. Presently, another and another of the black lumps is discovered and transferred to the box. Presently, we come to another lump, which is pale brown instead of black, and place it with the others. Now, having preserved as many specimens as are wanted, we make our way homeward through the rain and wind, and proceed to the microscope, in order to ascertain the precise character of the fluffy lumps taken from the burrows.

The day is much too dull and dismal to afford sufficient illumination, so the lamp is lighted, and one of the black objects placed under the half-inch glass. The first glance detects its nature. It is composed entirely of fragments of little flies. Black, shining bodies, heads, and severed wings are clustered thickly together, the wings shining out in every colour of the rainbow, amid the *débris* with which they are surrounded. The sand-grains look like lumps of sugar-candy, the withered, red-brown eyes still show their thousands of hexagonal lenses, the black, hairy legs and fragments of bodies lie about in utter confusion, while the wings, though broken from the body and mixed with sand and all kinds of miscellaneous rubbish, flash and glitter in ripples of crimson, green, gold, and azure. Gauzy and delicate as they are, they have survived the body to which they were once attached, and have not lost one whit of their former beauty. One fly presents a very curious aspect. It is a little, black, round-headed fly, quite shrivelled up and withered. It has lost all its legs, but it retains its wings, and adheres to the general mass by the very tips of those organs, projecting from the general mass as a tiny black imp sustained on bright, glittering, many-coloured wings that would do credit to a fairy. Altogether, one of these insect masses reminds me much of the 'pellets' which are found so abundantly in owls' nests, and which are composed of the skin, bones, and teeth of mice and the hard limbs and wing-cases of beetles.

The black lumps are all composed of the same materials, so we pass to one of the brown masses. No opalescent patches of colour betray the presence of wings, but projecting from it on every side are long, crooked legs, covered with sharp, brown, curved spikes, showing in a moment that they are the legs of spiders. All these brown masses are alike; the spiders are apparently of the same species, and all nearly the same size. After examining a considerable number of specimens, I can only find two materials for these masses, namely, spiders and flies, and in no instance is there a spider among the flies or a fly among the spiders. Now, why were these creatures buried in the bottom of these tunnels, and why are they so shrivelled and dismembered? They were placed there by the sand-wasp as food for her future young, just

as the Kentish bee stores her burrow with pollen. Sand-wasps in all their stages of existence are carnivorous, and so it is necessary to supply the young with the appropriate animal food.

There are very many species of sand-wasps, and each chooses some particular insect as food for its young. Many prefer flies, some furnish their young with aphides, and others choose beetles. Even the little hard-bodied turnip-beetle (turnip-fleas, as they are often called, on account of their small size and powers of jumping) are used for this purpose. How the little sand-wasp grub manages to eat them is more than I know, but perhaps the hard integuments may be softened by the damp of the burrow. This, however, is merely conjecture.

There is yet one insect to be accounted for. I have already mentioned the ruby-tail flies that in July were flitting so anxiously over the face of the quarry, their burnished crimson and blue mail flashing in the sunbeams like living jewellery. They were on a somewhat similar errand to that of the bees and wasps, but they carry it out in a different manner. They are parasites on the sand-wasps, and just as the sand-wasp grub eats the flies, so the larva of the ruby-tail eats both the sand-wasp grub and all its store of food. From observations that have been made on the habits of these insects, the larva seems at first to suck, rather than to eat, the unfortunate grub on which it feeds; but, having extracted nearly all the juices, proceeds to devour the other portions of the body.

The mother ruby-tail is wonderfully persevering in her attempts to insert an egg into some other insect's nest. Sometimes the rightful owner detects the intruder, and then the latter generally suffers for her deeds. When attacked by her angered foe, she usually tries to shield herself by rolling her body into a ball and lying motionless. Even this ruse, however, does not always save her, and she loses her life, together with her hope of providing for a future generation.

Considering the size of the ruby-tail, it can contract itself in a really wonderful manner. Some little time ago, on a bright day in early spring, I was looking at some rough palings upon a park fence, and was examining the little holes made by the Scolytus and similar beetles. The palings happened to face due south, and as the meridian sun shone on them, a ray penetrated into one of the holes and I discovered something blue within. I proceeded to cut it out very carefully, and there found a ruby-tail completely doubled up, like a hedgehog, within a hole scarcely large enough to admit a No. 5 shot. In the same row of palings I found plenty more specimens, all alive, and very much perplexed at being so unceremoniously ejected from the resting-place in which they had passed the winter.

HACKETTY FARM:

A STUDY OF AN INTERIOR AFTER THE DUTCH MANNER.

It is astonishing how much mental trouble aggravates bodily discomfort. Grace Staddon felt 'hitchy' and troubled in her mind, and this made her thoroughly miserable. Thorough misery is not *only* the property of high-born dames who dismiss their maids with a tragical 'Leave me, Simkins,' sit up all night in an embroidered *robe-de-chambre*, and appear at breakfast with pale and tear-stained faces; it falls sometimes on folk in linsey-woolsey gowns and worsted hose, sitting in black-beamed, low-ceilinged kitchens, whose happy country lives are made all the happier by these flecks of gloom.

Trouble seemed to be dropping down the open kitchen-chimney of Hacketty Farm, and all about the brown hair and flushed face of the maiden who sat over the fire, gloomily nursing the ghost of a tooth-ache. Grace Staddon was an orphan; as far as kith and kin went, alone in the world; but she was not on that account predisposed to melancholy. Ten years' milking and butter-making, floor-scrubbing and driving turkeys a-field, and, above all, ten years' sojourn with Mrs. Ridler of Hacketty Farm, more as an adopted child than as a servant, had given Grace something better to think of than her orphanage. It was impossible, on a bright October day, when even the fallen leaves couldn't keep still, that troubles of ten years ago should spoil present happiness. The cheerfulness that had grown out of a ten years' life at Hacketty Farm, and made Grace Staddon the sunny West of England maiden that she was, would not yield to anything of the past; it was a trouble of to-day that attacked her, as she held a peony-blushing cheek closely over the wood embers. She was vexed at something that had happened that very morning, thought herself utterly miserable, and cried over a mere pin-prick of pain.

First she was too hot, and left the fire for the settle, a high-backed construction of blackened oak, divided into seats like the stalls in an

old cathedral. Then the cat held possession of the seat nearest the fire, and Grace, unwilling to disturb it, took the next, which was too cold; so she went back to the little arm-chair on the hearth, that opened its arms just wide enough to let her sit down. Then pussy looked so warm and comfortable that she must needs pull it off the settle on to her knee, and scold it for purring so cosily; whereupon pussy stopped purring, and rounded the pupils of its eyes, put out its claws and sheathed them again, saying, as plainly as it could, that it *hated* being disturbed like that.

Altogether Grace Staddon was so taken up with her own troubles that she as nearly as possible forgot Mrs. Ridler's pans of milk that were simmering over the fire, and just on the point of ruffling their coverlets of clouted* cream into little turbulent ebullitions which, as every maker of Devonshire cream knows, would just have spoiled the whole thing.

'Dear, dear, to think o' that now,' said the girl, as she drew them away from the embers; 'and I so near as could be, let thicce pans boil. I never done such a thing afore since I come to Mrs. Herdler.'

(Herdler, with a strong aspiration, and the tip of the tongue curled back towards the throat, was the received pronounciation of the word Ridler. It takes a great deal of breath to say the word properly.)

The pans being shifted out of danger, Grace bethought herself of examining the clock. This was no modern affair, gorgeous with ships at sea and pink cottages under green trees, but a thing of good old-fashioned construction, touching the ceiling with its apex, and glossy with a mahogany coat. It lurked in the darkest corner of the kitchen, revealing Time's secrets only on a very close inspection. Just now, however, it gave warning and, with a noise like a house on fire, struck the hour.

'Vour o'clock, zure enough. Let's zee now; "put un on at cock-crow, tak' un off at milking-time;" it's time to hawl un off.'

And brightening with the termination of her vigil over the milk-pans, Grace carried them one by one into the dairy, and began to make the butter. The exoteric lovers of Devonshire cream may not be aware that all true Devonshire butter passes through this stage, being worked up by hand from the cream as it is taken from the scalding-pans. It was this operation that Grace now set about, rolling up the sleeves from two strong and rosy arms, pulling up her gown behind through her apron strings (an arrangement of which

* I prefer to derive this word from the cloth (clout)-like appearance which the cream assumes when the scalding operation is completed. The spelling 'clotted' is more modern.

our base fashion of posterior humps is an imitation), and settling herself to forget both ailments and grievances.

The toothache had vanished, quite roasted out of countenance; but the other trouble, which we have not yet narrated, lingered obstinately. It was nothing more or less than this. A certain young man, riding an iron-grey, had trotted past the farmyard-gate that morning, where there was a bridle-hook and stone-steps to help him to mount again, without drawing rein—trotted past very fast indeed, though he must have known that Mr. and Mrs. Ridler had started for market quite five minutes before. Perhaps Richard Yearl was anxious to overtake the farmer and his wife, liking their society better than that of Grace Staddon. Certainly it appeared as if this was the case, for though he had on several previous Saturdays stopped at the door of his own accord, and seemed quite surprised to find Grace alone, and said so so often that she was forced to believe him, though he seemed in no hurry to ride off again, and though Grace happened to be looking out of the window that very morning as he passed, yet the young farmer had ridden straight on without even a glance at the diamond panes in their setting of myrtle-bushes. Whatever she might have said if you had taxed her with being disappointed, Grace had expected something different from this. Perhaps she had been pluming herself on certain attractions she supposed herself to possess in the eyes of Mr. Yearl; perhaps certain elaborations of toilet, unnecessary for a morning of household work, had been entered into for his edification. At all events, he didn't come, and Grace Staddon was vexed at herself for being vexed at him, and conjured up a toothache to help her, and all sorts of miserable thoughts, so that she was only just recovering her spirits when the clock struck four, and she began to make butter.

To use so tender a term as 'love-passages' for what had passed between Grace and the young farmer on the iron-grey horse would be an exaggeration. He was a fine-looking fellow, with a great tendency to go red in the face on the slightest provocation—often on no provocation at all, if Grace Staddon was by. The two had been mutually taken with each other on Richard Yearl's first coming to occupy a neighbouring farm about a twelvemonth back; and it was no unusual thing for the iron-grey horse to stop at Hacketty Farm on market mornings whilst its rider chatted with John Herdler, and exchanged a nod or a word with Grace as she bustled in and out of the dairy. Latterly, he had timed his visit so as to arrive just after Mr. Herdler had jogged off with his wife to market. For reasons of her own, Grace Staddon did not put this down to chance; and thus was it that, Richard Yearl having neglected to call that morning, quite a

turmoil was created in her heart; and she was only now recovering herself, late in the afternoon, under the consciousness that Sunday's butter *must* be made before Mrs. Ridler came back from market.

Under these circumstances, Grace Staddon plunged her hands into the pan, and set to work with a will, singing:

Polly was a pretty maid,
Red and white, and wholly nice;
Everyone who passed that way
Saw and loved her in a trice.

John he was a —

She stopped, for there was a noise at the latch of the kitchen door, and some one stepped in, and said, in a loud voice, addressing the unseen singer, 'Farmer Herdler arn't come home yet, have her?'

Grace drew her creamily gloved hands from the butter-pan, and answered in a great flurry, 'No, Richard Yearl, he arn't.'

She couldn't make up her mind whether it would be more civil to show herself, or whether she might follow her inclination and remain hidden in the dairy; Richard Yearl, also, was in half a mind to run away when he did not find the object of his search in the first room he came to; but something in the sound of the *Richard* Yearl, in place of the usual *Mister* Yearl, encouraged him to approach the dairy door.

'You sure he arn't come in, Grace Staddon; I thought he must ha' started home afore I.'

'No, he arn't come, but it 'ont be long first; wull 'e tak' a seat and wait for un, Muster Yearl?'

The *Richard* had been a mistake, uttered in the hurry of the moment, and she took the first opportunity to replace it by *Muster*.

'You'll not mind me going on with the butter,' she said, plunging at it again; 'tak' a seat in the kitchen, do, Muster Yearl.'

'I'll stand, thank 'e,' said Mr. Yearl, taking up an uneasy attitude against the door-post, ready to declare himself in the dairy or in the kitchen, whichever might seem the safer place.

After this there was an interval of silence, during which Grace eyed her work so intently that some people would have said it was enough to stop the butter coming. Mr. Yearl couldn't for the life of him think of anything to say, so he repeated after a time, 'I rackon you're sure Mr. Herdler arn't come yet; but may be it 'ont be long first.'

Grace didn't feel herself called upon to reply to this, so she went on with her work, and there ensued another silence, broken only by the 'scrouging' sounds of the cream as it was being manipulated into butter.

Richard Yearl went back through the kitchen to see if his horse

was standing quietly, took the opportunity of listening for Mr. Ridler's returning wheels, seemed relieved to hear nothing but the whirr of the distant mill, entered the kitchen shutting the door carefully behind him, strode across to the dairy, dropping on the way quite a valuable collection of casts in clay of his hob-nail boots, and took up his old position against the door-post.

What Grace thought of these proceedings it is impossible to say; if she noted them with her mind she certainly did not with her eyes: the butter-making process was so extremely engrossing that she seemed quite unconscious of Mr. Yearl's presence.

There is generally a straw ready to oblige a drowning man, and in this instance Richard Yearl lighted upon a conversational one which served his purpose better, perhaps, than at the first clutch he had anticipated.

'What makes your cheek so red? Right side, I mean; it didn't oughter be redder than the left.' He spoke as if he was passing judgment on a prize ox.

'I've had the toothache terrible bad all day; maybe it's that's done it.'

'Have 'e got toothache? Darn un, it's darned worritting varmint. I had un about a year ago most every day for a wake or more; her drav me into the cold creams and hot fumes, that her did. But I can crack un up now; I can master un.'

'What do 'e do to un, Mr. Yearl?'

'Well, I got dree or vour lawrel-leaves, and I hetted 'em up a bit, and stuck 'em on the jaw, and blessed if it didn't tak' un right away. Darned if I don't get zum for yew,' he added with a sudden inspiration, making for the door.

It was in vain that Grace shouted out that she didn't want them—that her toothache was quite well now; Richard Yearl either didn't hear or didn't attend, and was out of the house in a minute in search of the necessary laurel-leaves. He found them in the strip of garden that separated the white-washed front of Hacketty Farm from the road, where evergreens, and tree-fuchsias, and myrtle-bushes, and snap-dragon stems studded with ripe seed-vessels grew up against the house-wall. Returning with the leaves, Richard Yearl knelt down before the fire to warm them, calling out every few seconds, 'Coming dractlee,' 'Ont be long,' 'They be almost hetted up,' as if Grace was suffering the most excruciating agonies without them. When he appeared with the leaves duly 'hetted up' an unforeseen difficulty arose.

'How be I to hold 'em up?' said Grace, 'I can't put my hands to it, I'm too busy-like.'

Mr. Yearl's face displayed the deepest consternation; presently, however, it brightened up, as at a happy discovery.

'I'll succour 'em for 'e,' he said; 'yew go on with the cream.'

So with a great deal of giggling and blushing on the part of Grace, and an extraordinary amount of awkwardness on the part of Richard Yearl, the leaves *were* held against the red cheek, except sometimes when they dropped into the pan, or, having cooled, had to be re-warmed at the kitchen fire.

More than one customer complained next week of bits of green stuff in Mrs. Ridler's butter; as for the benefit Grace Staddon derived from the application, her cheeks were as hot as before, and there was not a pin to choose between them which was the redder of the two.

Of course, even an imaginary toothache must yield in time to such treatment, and in time butter must come under the most unfavourable influences. So, in half-an-hour, Grace was able to pronounce herself cured, and the butter made, and to wash her hands, and say good-bye to Mr. Yearl at the yard door, in a most decorous manner. Mr. Yearl seemed to have forgotten that he had called to see Farmer Herdler, and left no message for him when he rode away.

Not many minutes after the last foot-falls of the iron-grey had died away at the bend of Hacketty Lane, a spring-cart appeared from the opposite direction, bringing John Ridler and his wife from market. Their conversation, as they drove into the yard, would almost convey the impression that Richard Yearl had not been quite truthful in his professions of ignorance as to Mr. Ridler's movements.

'What time did Herchard Yearl say he was coming to-night?' said the farmer; and his wife answered him, 'Eight o'clock, John, and her said her'd wait till you let un in.'

'Well, what a terrible frightened man her be, to be zure; do 'e think her's been here afore us this afternoon?' But Grace's appearance in the yard prevented Mrs. Ridler giving her conjectures on the subject, and the farmer led off the horse and cart, chuckling over his thoughts.

'Why, child, what's the circumstance of your face being all a-flame like? What have 'e done to it?'

'Toothache, Mrs. Herdler; terrible bad it's been all the time you was to Duncoby.'

Perhaps it was because she had magnified this scrap of a toothache most untruthfully that Grace blushed a deeper red, and tried to escape further questioning by a retreat into the dairy.

'What have 'e done to it?'

Grace was obliged to come back and stand upon her defence.

'I struck un with brandy, and then I tried the piece of wisdom old

Margaret Cockram gave to mother long time back.' She would have gone on just to gain time, and divert any further questions, but Mrs. Herdler interrupted her in a rather contemptuous voice:

'Like enough them'll do for Margaret Cockram, but they 'ont for me, nor yet for yew, Grace.' Then she added, in a tone of sweeping scepticism, 'Robinson Crusoe, Joseph and his brethren, Beauty and the Beast; I don't believe any one o' them.'

Mr. Herdler came in at that moment, and was consulted as to the best thing to be done for Grace's ailment. Grace protested that it was cured, but the farmer insisted upon her coming to the window to see how she looked. The result of this examination seemed to tickle him amazingly; he held Grace at arm's length, and, looking first at one cheek and then at the other, began to laugh heartily.

'It's very kind of him,' thought Grace, 'to be glad it's cured; but I don't see why he should laugh and pull me about so.'

But when Mrs. Herdler began to laugh too, Grace couldn't help thinking that there was something more in it than rejoicing over a cured toothache. Was it possible that they had seen Richard Yearl riding away? She wished he hadn't been stupid enough to stay so long.

Of course there was no need to tell them that he had called, unless she was asked, and so she walked off into the back premises, without appearing to notice their laughter.

Mr. Herdler took advantage of her absence to sidle up to his wife, point his thumb to the region of her heart, and say mysteriously, 'He arn't a been here this arternoon at all—oh, no! Her cheeks arn't red at all—oh, no!' After which they laughed again, and the farmer went back into the yard, and Grace Staddon came in to lay the cloth for tea, and Mrs. Herdler went out to count her 'gooze-chickens.'

All through tea—a meal which lasted a long time at Hacketty Farm—Mr. Herdler was afflicted with a most troublesome choking fit, which seemed to be aggravated whenever he looked at Grace, so that Mrs. Herdler was compelled to say that whether he was laughing or choking she didn't know, but whichever it was, she wished he'd be quiet and finish his tea. Whereat Mr. Herdler would look again at Grace Staddon, and say, 'Oh, dear, no; not at all!' after which he would be unable to go on eating for at least five minutes. Grace felt very uncomfortable at this extraordinary behaviour. There was nothing so unusual, after all, in Mr. Yearl calling at the farm, if it was *that* that excited Mr. Herdler's amusement. Besides, why didn't Mr. Herdler ask her about it, instead of going on laughing at nothing at all? She wasn't sure, however, that she shouldn't blush if they began to talk about Richard Yearl: so, to avoid all danger on that score, it

was better not to ask Mr. Herdler the cause of his merriment, and to pass over unnoticed various insinuations which the farmer made from time to time when he had sobered down a little, and began to make serious havoc among the provisions. Finally, she was glad to escape from the kitchen as soon as tea was over, both in order to avoid any embarrassing questions, and because, it being now almost eight o'clock and quite dark, she had a mind to put in practice a certain experiment in divination which had come from that same 'wise woman,' Margaret Cockram, who had copied the potent charm against toothache into Grace's Bible.

The experiment is this. Let the maid who wishes to find out her lover dip both her hands into a mug of buttermilk, open the house-door as soon as it is dark, and stand with her back to it, holding her hands behind her back so as to let the wind play upon them. She will presently feel a finger writing some letters on her palm. She must stand quite still and find out what those letters are; they will be the first letters of her future husband's name.

Believing in part, but more than half in doubt, and chiefly for the purpose of cherishing the delightful illusion that she was 'in love,' Grace softly opened the door that led into the straw-yard, and looked out. In the faint starlight, she could discern the boundary wall in outline, and here and there a dark mass couched in the straw. She could hear the interminable munching of bullocks in their stalls, and the distant trot of a late horseman beating a sort of rhythm in the still night. Leaving the door open, she first ascertained that there were no sounds of movement in the kitchen, and then went to the corner where the pan of buttermilk stood ready for the purpose.

She had just taken up a position, with her wet hands turned behind her towards the open door, through which the night air blew coolly in upon them, when the clock in the kitchen gave warning of the hour; first a sharp click, and then, after the monotonous ticking had been solemnly resumed as if nothing were going to happen, came the noisy whirr that heralded the chimes, and then the chimes themselves tinkling out a minuet of the past century with a stately regard for time. Grace, with her hands behind her back, made the conjecture that it was going to strike eight, and wondered if it would disturb Mr. and Mrs. Herdler, whom she supposed to be asleep before the fire, when suddenly there was a most distinct sensation in the palm of her left hand as of a finger touching it. Almost at the same instant both her hands were seized and pinned to her sides, whilst something rough and hairy brushed against her neck, and she felt somebody's lips kissing—yes, kissing her left cheek.

A scream of honest fright roused the farmer and his wife from their

fireside dreams, and brought them, running, to the dairy-door, which they opened in such a hurry that the wind blew out the light in Mrs. Ridler's hand, and they were left to discover the cause of Grace's alarm as best they could in the dark. The astonishing thing was that Farmer Ridler began by bursting into a fit of laughter, and saying, as soon as he could recover himself sufficiently to speak, 'What have 'e been doing to un, Richard Yearl, to mak 'un holler like an old scritch owl?'

But Grace struggled away from Richard Yearl's arm, and ran to Mrs. Ridler, whom she followed into the kitchen, and, when the candle was relighted, sat down by her on the settle, while Farmer Ridler and Richard Yearl (the latter looking remarkably sheepish) sat on the opposite side of the fire. Mr. Ridler amused himself till the candle had burnt up with scolding Mr. Yearl for coming round to farm-houses in that way to frighten young maids at their work, to all which Mr. Yearl replied monosyllabically or not at all. At last, when the candle had recovered its sudden extinction, and had been prodded up by Mrs. Ridler's knitting-needle into a state of blaze, the old farmer, turning his merry eyes on Grace Staddon, discovered the milky condition of that young woman's hands; looking also at Richard Yearl's hands, he saw milky marks there too.

'Why, Grace, what's thicce white muck; there didn't ought to be no butter to make this time o' night, ought there, missus?'

'No, for zure, John; what have her been doing? what the matter with 'e, Grace?'

Grace's explanation did not seem to be forthcoming, and so Richard Yearl, who felt that it was time to speak if he mean't to speak at all, made a desperate effort, and told how he had ridden over that evening, with a certain purpose that Varmer Herdler knew of, and had fastened up his horse in the outer yard, and had come round to the back to see if the door was open; and how he had found it open, and Grace Staddon standing with her back towards it, and her hands behind her back; and how he had taken hold to shake hands like, and she had screamed, and he thought it was summat like milk she had on her hands; it felt a bit greasy.

This revelation cast a new light upon Mrs. Ridler's mind. She had not passed her maidenhood in that neighbourhood without learning the 'butter-milk spell,' and to Farmer Ridler's intense glee, and in spite of Grace Staddon twitching at her gown and treading on her foot, she explained its working to the two men. Under the circumstances of the case the recital caused the old farmer exquisite enjoyment, and Richard Yearl listened most intently, only interrupting Mrs. Ridler now and then to say—'Dipped her hands in; did her really now?' 'And were Grace a-looking out for un?'—not addressing his remarks

to the person most concerned in them, but to Mrs. Ridler, as if *she* knew everything that was passing in Grace's mind.

At last, when Mrs. Ridler told all she knew of the divination, as it used to be employed in her young days, holding Grace's arm with one hand and stroking her brown curls with the other, then Richard Yearl said—'And are you most zure, Mrs. Herdler, Grace were a doing of it now?' And Mrs. Ridler said—'Mr. Yearl, you must stop and sup along with we, and then you can ask Grace yourself about un. John'll see to putting your horse right. John, go to un this minute, and don't sit giggling there; and you'll please to excuse me, I'll not be long, but I've got a sight of linen to look over upstairs.'

And ever since that night Grace (who is Grace Yearl now, with a dairy all to herself) has been a firm believer in spells; and she never makes butter now without thinking of her butter-milk wooing.

PERRIN BROWNE.

A FIRST 'REPRESENTATION.'

BY CAMILLE BARRÈRE.

HIPPOLYTE LAMPION, the illustrious dramatist at whose feet the theatrical managers of Paris crouch in submissive postures and depose their prayers and money-bags, is reputed the luckiest dramatic author of the Boulevard in his intercourse with the Government censors; his *confrères* dart envious and even venomous glances at the great Hippolyte, as he swaggers past the marble tables of the Café de Madrid, and sits in state in the particular sanctified corner (on the right hand side of the counter) reserved for his *levées*. This Lampion, they say in whispers, is the dramatic quack in essence; what would he now be but for the official lifts that raised him to exalted pre-eminence and forced him on the public? One remembers the slovenly Lampion when he used to wait for hours in the antechamber of the Gymnase for a favourable look from the *jeune premier*, in a threadbare coat out at the elbows, and boots he used to blacken over carefully in order to conceal the colour of his socks, too apparent between the gaping cracks of the leather; another enviously dwells on his adulatory treatment of the *chef de claque* when his first comedy was given at the 'Délassements Chorégraphiques;' and a third shows with stern logic how this contemptible Lampion paraphrased Molière, Beaumarchais, and even Scribe, without the two former's wit and a bidding over the latter's catchpenny ingenuity; in truth, if these disinterested critics were taken *au sérieux*, there would remain of Hippolyte Lampion's capacities just enough to make a very inferior shoeblack; for he has no conceptive power, no vocabulary, no invention, no gaiety; his grammar is of the Jacques Bonhomme style; he cannot spell, and at the most his intellectual aptitudes qualified him for the supervision of a crossing. What these disinterested censors would be qualified for themselves, if their criticisms were true, it would be indiscreet to hint. Be it as it may, Lampion has another piece 'on' at the Gymnase. The first 'representation' is announced for the

morrow; the public is already in a fever of excitement. Seats for the 'première' have attained fabulous prices; the *service de la presse* has to fight a hand-to-hand battle for the maintenance of its traditional rights; the Place du Gymnase and the neighbouring *cafés* resound with the lamentations of those who cannot ensure an admittance for the next day at the price of gold; and Hippolyte Lampion is pulled to pieces as soon as he appears in public by herds of friends, claiming the rights—were it only a humble '*bonnet d'évêque*'—of devoted friendship. (The said friends were probably running him down five minutes before.) The critics prepare their good Toledo pens, and, in the soft velvet-like lines peculiar to the oracular demonstrations of Parisian journalists, extol enthusiastically what they will cut up in next Monday's *feuilleton*.

Poor Lampion! *La gloire est un martyre*, of which the palm is evidently not in this lower world. A king has his obtrusive courtiers; a minister, his untiring solicitors; a supreme poet, his numberless letter writers; a princely philanthropist, his eternal petitioners; and sometimes Hippolyte Lampion surprises himself in a fit of regret for his gaping shoes, white-black coat, and airless attic on the sixth floor of a quartier latin house of the Rue de Seine; and the winter, when the cold wind that penetrated between the slates of the roof, and the absence of wood obliged him to burn a manuscript to warm his frost-bitten fingers; and the fifteen-sous dinners at a Pension, beside which Balzac's 'Maman Vauquer' fare was a sumptuous repast, and the five centimes a line grudgingly given for his verses by the 'Avenir Poétique,' and Bohemia with its painful gaieties and good-humoured sufferings. This 'première représentation' has well-nigh driven the brilliant and envied Lampion to the Morgue. When he had finished the five acts asked of him by the Gymnase, he had to defend every word of the piece with the Censure, until he seriously meditated the wholesale destruction of this respectable institution by some Lucrezia Borgia-like device. The Minister of the Interior could not allow *this* allusion to pass; the Minister of Fine Arts considered *that* satire too bitter; and there was a dangerous phrase, running thus: 'Joseph, give me hunting boots!' which evidently contained some attack on the form of government, though what the attack was, all the ministers and censors put together could not tell for the life of them. After an exchange of private letters, recriminations, disputes, official despatches running thus, 'Sir, I have the pleasure to inform you that the State Minister authorises the maintenance of the words, "Pardon, après vous, monsieur!" in your new comedy,' Hippolyte Lampion was at last clear of the clutches and scissors of these incorruptible censors; not without, however, having rehandled two acts of his piece completely, and

taken off the keenest edge of his witticisms ; and the diplomacy expended by the brilliant author on this comparatively happy result would have seriously entitled him to the ambassadorship of Berlin.

But the Censure was only a foretaste of an interminable sequel of harassing eventualities. That test that sends every Parisian dramatic author into a fit of trembling—the distribution of parts—must follow. How Hippolyte Lampion can conciliate the two rival actors, both inscribed for his piece—Trognon and Pipobec—is a mystery ; and there is the famous actress, Mademoiselle Turlupinette, whom Lampion has selected for his heroine, to the detriment and exquisite rage of Mademoiselle Léontine, her deadly foe, who has only the fifth important part of the comedy—the part of a soubrette, without diamonds, or Brussels lace, or emerald necklaces, or satin dresses, to make up for Léontine's dramatic nullity. On the first day after the 'distribution' was known, poor Hippolyte Lampion received the two following notes :—

Mon petit chéri,—If you don't wish me to scratch your eyes out, you will send that blockhead of a Turlupinette about her business, and give me her part. Now, be *gentil*, my dear Hippolyte, only for once.—Your foe or friend, LEONTINE.

The second note ran thus :—

Mon petit ange,—I hear you actually contemplate giving my part to that idiot of a Léontine. If you don't wish me to scratch your eyes out, leave her to vegetate in the mire.—(Signed) TURLUPINETTE.

The following day brought two angry epistles from the great actors Pipobec and Trognon, immediately followed by their persons, and a scene of tragedy and comedy agreeably mingled, after which Hippolyte was fain to invoke the interference of a sergent de ville. And then the two enraged rivals went to shed tears in the manager's bosom, and to lament on the insignificance of their parts ; and the manager came to Hippolyte and beseeched him to spare the feelings of the two pillars of his theatre. The rehearsals began, and so did the following scene, repeated no less than six times a week : the author sat down at his little deal table with the MS. before him and the *régisseur* on his flank ; Trognon, Pipobec, Turlupinette, Léontine, and the others began, all rolling inflamed eye-balls at each other, and especially at Hippolyte Lampion ; out of spite against the author, all, with truly touching solidarity, muddled through their parts and did everything to raise Lampion's nervous irritability to a pitch bordering on delirium tremens. 'Pardon me, my dear M. Trognon,' said the author with unimpeachable suavity, you pronounce this phrase, "Madame, je vous aime et n'ai jamais aimé que vous," in the tone of an undertaker under the influence of potato-brandy not of a passionate lover ; pray begin again.' Trognon

mutters that it is the actor and not the author who is to judge, and speaks the phrase more lugubriously than ever, Mademoiselle Turlupinette forgets her answer, and laughs outright, and Hippolyte Lampion's blood begins to boil. Then Léontine falls out with her rival, and then follows an exchange of invectives which interrupts the progress of the rehearsal very materially. But when Pipobec flatly refuses to take up a position on the stage the author assigns to him, the cup of bitterness overflows, and Hippolyte, throwing up his MS., rushes out of the theatre, declaring that he withdraws his piece, and followed by the perplexed stage manager, who tries to soothe him. A reconciliation is effected, and the same dissensions are repeated on the morrow and on the following days, until the actors perceive that Hippolyte has had his fill of vicissitudes, and may, once for all, send them about their business.

The rehearsals are finished: the great '*première représentation*' is at last posted up. Needless to dwell on the steeplechase after Lampion for tickets; the list of his mortal enemies is increased every day by his impossibility to satisfy countless demands; needless also to speak of the fight for the composition of the bills. Trognon and Pipobec contend for the first rank; Turlupinette weeps because the letters of her name are not big enough. She wants the '*vedette*;' and a cabale, headed by Léontine, has prevented her from obtaining it from that monster Hippolyte. '*Allez au diable!*' is the general cursory answer this much-tested individual now invariably gives to masculine and feminine supplications. Hippolyte has even had *démêlés* with the *chef de claque*. This worthy took upon himself to indicate certain parts of the MS. that were to be rehandled, whereupon Hippolyte sent him to the other side of the Boulevard, and thereby deserved his malignant hatred; and as the *chef de claque* was a power, and may-be held the success of the piece in his hands, Hippolyte was compelled to make *amende honorable*, and beg this warrior's pardon. The warrior was magnanimous and granted it, subject to certain pecuniary promises and vile flattery.

But it is eight o'clock; the curtain rises, and the *première* begins. Lampion is behind the scene, ready for all emergencies; he looks through the loophole of the curtain, and espies with terror some of his direst enemies in the stalls. But no matter. The first act is given and received coldly. Everyone—actors, critics, manager, figurants—cold-shoulder the author. 'It is not astonishing,' exclaims Pipobec, who has not yet made his *entrée*: 'my part is insignificant; if I had been there I might have saved the act; the piece is idiotic!' Turlupinette and Léontine are impertinent: 'Eh bien, Monsieur Lampion, que vous disais-je?' Even the prompter is

sardonic. At the second act the public warms; Pipobec's tirades are received with tremendous applause; his superbly put challenge to Trognon turns out a splendid triumph; Mademoiselle Turlupinette brings down rounds and rounds of applause in the love-scene; and when the curtain falls, the radiant Pipobec presses Lampion in his arms, congratulates him, thanks him, and shouts that the piece is magnificent. Turlupinette is all smiles and mellow words for Lampion; the figurants salute him respectfully, and the manager will not let him off until he has promised him his next three comedies. The third, fourth, and fifth acts are, if possible, better received than the second. The battle is won; Lampion has not one enemy, and a thousand more friends. He is the hero of the night—the great, the admirable Lampion. His admirers would almost unharness his cab-horse and drag him home, but Lampion receives these universal congratulations with a sarcastic smile, and wonders where all these worshippers would be if his piece had failed.

BETWEEN MOOR AND MAIN :

AN AUTUMNAL SKETCH.

By H. SCHÜTZ WILSON.

She is coming—my dove, my dear ;
She is coming—my life, my fate.

BETWEEN sea and moor there is, on the wild coast of Chalkshire, a space of fair English landscape which comprises roads, and woods, and fields. A few miles inland, the great wide moors stretch away in a prairie of billowy hills; hills purple in the golden sunlight, darkly indigo when great, grey cloud-masses gloom the noble waste. On the other hand, the sea, ever varying in ceaseless change of aspect, spreads far and wide to the distant horizon. A strip of homely beauty extends between the unmoving moor and the ever restless sea.

Within this nobly-bounded strip stand stately mansions, olden halls, quaint and ancient farm-houses, and many of those lovely cottages which form one of the chief beauties of our dear old English land. A ruined abbey lends the charm of picturesque association to the soft fair valley which lies very close to the little country town called Silver-spring—a town which doubtless owes its pretty name to a deep old well, and to the crystal spring which still bubbles and sparkles from out the kindly earth. On the coast, close under the high cliffs, nestles a little fishing village, which sends out boats that darken the bright waves with burnt sienna sails. Not very far from the ivied ruin and from the quiet town is Fernside, the fair country-seat of a Chalkshire country family.

Fernside was and is the charming residence of the Poyntons. Every year, so soon as 'the Long' commenced, which set their son free, they assembled a few guests, and those who had once visited at Fernside were glad to come again. The father was a stately white-headed old gentleman, polite and punctilious, and with a touch of the manner of the old-world school, which is now beginning to pass away. Though sixty

years of age, he was hale, upright, active; his eye still bright and his cheek ruddy. The mother, slight and delicate, often in bad health, was exquisitely kind and graceful as a hostess. She was deferentially attached to her husband; devotedly attached to her children. The three children, to whom we are about to be introduced, were Charley, Clara, and Lotty.

Clara Poynton was nearly twenty. Though only by a very little above the standard height of woman, her fine figure was so upright and so well carried that she seemed to be tall. Her complexion had that tender delicacy of colour which suggests the dawn of a blush, and the shape and contour of the face were of that perfect oval which involves the most delicately graduated outline of softly-rounded cheek and chin. Her clear shining hazel eyes looked at everything steadily and directly. Her manner had that calm composure and sweet self-possession which indicate a nature never yet stirred to its depths. Her step was quick, springy, and decisive; her attitudes were well poised and always graceful. The thick braids of bright golden hair, and the faint brilliancy of *teint* made her eyes seem very large. The character expressed through the physiognomy of the whole being was equable, well poised, noble charm; but the romance latent in her nature would be suggested only to a fine observer who had some opportunity for study. This latent romance was subtly indicated by a trick of the voice; clear and bright in the morning, it sank to a soft hush in twilight or in moonlight. She had some instinctive power of obtaining well-fitting dresses, which revealed smoothly the perfect outline of a glorious form; and she had, moreover, the happiest talent for always choosing the colours in which she looked best. She played and sang well, but would seldom play or sing before strangers. Destitute of vanity, she despised display. She would dress as carefully, in compliance with her own inner-sense of the fitting and the beautiful, when alone, as she would for 'society;' and I never heard her sing so well as she did on occasions when she was alone and fancied herself unheard. She was singularly truthful and honourable, and held in great contempt the common wiles of womanhood. Her character, though not fully developed, was full of tender force and translucent clearness.

Clara's great female friend was a great contrast to herself. Mrs. Seymour was an extremely pretty little woman, with dark rippling hair, and dark eyes surmounted by extraordinarily long eyelashes. A brunette, she had a beautiful glow of colour, and Clara frequently called her, as a pet name, 'Carnation.' Her real name was Juliet. The little lady did not dislike moderate flirtation, but pursued the occupation solely as an amusement. Her manner was usually very

quiet and subdued; but the elvish little witch was full of quaint, merry mischief, and she had singular powers of satire. At times she said, dropping them out very gently, quietly humorous things. She read a great deal, and was much cleverer than was commonly supposed. Her little low laugh was a delicacy, and her eyes could fill and brim with humour and with merriment. She was warm-hearted and very constant in her friendships; but towards people that she did not know well, or did not much like, she turned outside the lightest and most frivolous side of her quaint and piquante character. She liked to be petted and made much of, and openly expressed a preference for male society. Women, she said, did not amuse her until she quarrelled with them. She was quick to resent, but generous and kindly, and had the faculty of worshipping, from afar off, men of mark and power. With her own sex she was not very popular, though between Clara and herself existed a long-standing, hearty, frank friendship. Men were always attracted by her, but stupid men became gradually rather afraid of her. She kept them off with little sharp-pointed porcupine quills of irony and sarcasm. Carnation was a great charm in a country house. In order, as she said, to preserve propriety, and to keep order among them, she went out attended by a small circle of her male admirers; and it was irresistibly amusing to see her sketching composedly while three or four eager but jealous gallants rendered her, blunderingly, all the services she required, and amused her, as she remarked, 'sometimes for a whole morning.' Her husband was a tall, lymphatic, handsome blond, older than his wife, whom she teased and charmed in her peculiar way. Before strangers, she always treated him with an absurd assumption of distant coldness, as if she had only just been introduced to him, but she was really attached to him, and he was hugely fond of her. They agreed very well. He was fond of yachting, while Juliet detested the sea; so she had given him leave to go on a cruise, and was spending the time of his absence with her friend Clara.

There was a very High Church young curate in the parish, who was strongly attracted by Mrs. Seymour, and was always dangling after her. She used him for her mirth—yea, for her laughter, and always bantered him unmercifully; a fact of which the curate, who was a person of no great intelligence, was happily unconscious.

Clara sometimes remonstrated with her friend about this treatment of her sacerdotal butt.

'Clary, dear,' asked Mrs. Seymour, solemnly, 'do you think it irreverent to chaff a curate?'

Clara knew that Mrs. Seymour's solemnity of manner did not always overrule solemnity of thought, and therefore only laughed in reply.

'Because,' continued the fair tormentor, 'the fellow is such a donkey, and donkeys were surely made for our amusement and delight, Clary? If I didn't tease him—he never sees it, you know—I couldn't stand him at all. He is such a bore. We women have a hard lot with respect to bores. They can always find us in our dens, our hutches, our homes. We can't escape them; we can't fly; we are tied to a stake, and, bear-like, we must fight the course. I try to fight a good fight with them. Men can avoid each other, but women can't avoid men. What do you think, Clary? I suggested to my clerical friend to intone his sermons!'

'Take care, take care, Carnation,' responded Clara, in dismay; 'he'll really do it, I think.'

'I hoped so,' replied Mrs. Seymour, 'especially as he chortled in his joy, and said that it seemed to him a sweet Catholic idea. But he's sure to consult some one, and he'll be told that he mustn't do it. Pity, isn't it?'

At this instant they heard his thin, unvirile voice, and then the lank black figure of the curate was seen approaching the window, and the ladies had to retire to compose themselves before meeting him.

There were two other young lady guests, Laura and Fanny Graham. They were the nieces of Miss Northcote, who accompanied them as their protectress and manageress. They were pretty and popular girls, fond of amusing and of being amused, and were always ready to play croquet or the piano. They enjoyed picnics, and revelled in dancing. As in magazines there is usually some 'padding,' which fills space and supplements more attractive articles, so, in a country house, or in any other chance assemblage of human beings, one often meets with persons who subserve a useful purpose and yet have no very distinctive character or charms. So it was with Laura and with Fanny. As they were in the house they must be mentioned, but they need not be described. They were so inferior to Clara and to Juliet that art, which always selects, passes lightly by such minor flowers to linger lovingly with the carnation and the rose. There was also one other guest, whose portrait, like that of Marino Faliero in the long gallery of Doges, can only be indicated by a blank space.

Another guest stopping at Fernside was Percy Nugent. He was wonderfully smart, brisk, lively, invariably cheerful, and very pleasant in manner. He had an immense amount of practical tact in life; could always reach a railway station at the very last moment, and yet obtain the very best place; was remarkably clever in arranging picnics and other pleasure parties, and was generally liked. He dressed well, and was singularly neat in all his ways. Able men liked him because he was an agreeable companion for their lighter hours, and

quiet and subdued; but the elvish little witch was full of quaint, merry mischief, and she had singular powers of satire. At times she said, dropping them out very gently, quietly humorous things. She read a great deal, and was much cleverer than was commonly supposed. Her little low laugh was a delicacy, and her eyes could fill and brim with humour and with merriment. She was warm-hearted and very constant in her friendships; but towards people that she did not know well, or did not much like, she turned outside the lightest and most frivolous side of her quaint and piquante character. She liked to be petted and made much of, and openly expressed a preference for male society. Women, she said, did not amuse her until she quarrelled with them. She was quick to resent, but generous and kindly, and had the faculty of worshipping, from afar off, men of mark and power. With her own sex she was not very popular, though between Clara and herself existed a long-standing, hearty, frank friendship. Men were always attracted by her, but stupid men became gradually rather afraid of her. She kept them off with little sharp-pointed porcupine quills of irony and sarcasm. Carnation was a great charm in a country house. In order, as she said, to preserve propriety, and to keep order among them, she went out attended by a small circle of her male admirers; and it was irresistibly amusing to see her sketching composedly while three or four eager but jealous gallants rendered her, blunderingly, all the services she required, and amused her, as she remarked, 'sometimes for a whole morning.' Her husband was a tall, lymphatic, handsome blond, older than his wife, whom she teased and charmed in her peculiar way. Before strangers, she always treated him with an absurd assumption of distant coldness, as if she had only just been introduced to him, but she was really attached to him, and he was hugely fond of her. They agreed very well. He was fond of yachting, while Juliet detested the sea; so she had given him leave to go on a cruise, and was spending the time of his absence with her friend Clara.

There was a very High Church young curate in the parish, who was strongly attracted by Mrs. Seymour, and was always dangling after her. She used him for her mirth—yea, for her laughter, and always bantered him unmercifully; a fact of which the curate, who was a person of no great intelligence, was happily unconscious.

Clara sometimes remonstrated with her friend about this treatment of her sacerdotal butt.

'Clary, dear,' asked Mrs. Seymour, solemnly, 'do you think it irreverent to chaff a curate?'

Clara knew that Mrs. Seymour's solemnity of manner did not always cover solemnity of thought, and therefore only laughed in reply.

‘Because,’ continued the fair tormentor, ‘the fellow is such a donkey, and donkeys were surely made for our amusement and delight, Clary? If I didn’t tease him—he never sees it, you know—I couldn’t stand him at all. He is such a bore. We women have a hard lot with respect to bores. They can always find us in our dens, our hutches, our homes. We can’t escape them; we can’t fly; we are tied to a stake, and, bear-like, we must fight the course. I try to fight a good fight with them. Men can avoid each other, but women can’t avoid men. What do you think, Clary? I suggested to my clerical friend to intone his sermons!’

‘Take care, take care, Carnation,’ responded Clara, in dismay; ‘he’ll really do it, I think.’

‘I hoped so,’ replied Mrs. Seymour, ‘especially as he chortled in his joy, and said that it seemed to him a sweet Catholic idea. But he’s sure to consult some one, and he’ll be told that he mustn’t do it. Pity, isn’t it?’

At this instant they heard his thin, unvirile voice, and then the lank black figure of the curate was seen approaching the window, and the ladies had to retire to compose themselves before meeting him.

There were two other young lady guests, Laura and Fanny Graham. They were the nieces of Miss Northcote, who accompanied them as their protectress and manageress. They were pretty and popular girls, fond of amusing and of being amused, and were always ready to play croquet or the piano. They enjoyed picnics, and revelled in dancing. As in magazines there is usually some ‘padding,’ which fills space and supplements more attractive articles, so, in a country house, or in any other chance assemblage of human beings, one often meets with persons who subserve a useful purpose and yet have no very distinctive character or charms. So it was with Laura and with Fanny. As they were in the house they must be mentioned, but they need not be described. They were so inferior to Clara and to Juliet that art, which always selects, passes lightly by such minor flowers to linger lovingly with the carnation and the rose. There was also one other guest, whose portrait, like that of Marino Faliero in the long gallery of Doges, can only be indicated by a blank space.

Another guest stopping at Fernside was Percy Nugent. He was wonderfully smart, brisk, lively, invariably cheerful, and very pleasant in manner. He had an immense amount of practical tact in life; could always reach a railway station at the very last moment, and yet obtain the very best place; was remarkably clever in arranging picnics and other pleasure parties, and was generally liked. He dressed well, and was singularly neat in all his ways. Able men liked him because he was an agreeable companion for their lighter hours, and

because his tact in all the minor affairs of existence was valuable. He was usually good-natured, and was never out of humour. Percy never read or thought. His character was an utter blank on the side of art, literature, religion; but he danced well, was full of small talk and small jokes, could carve, and shoot, and play billiards. He was rather good-looking, about thirty years old, and was incessantly alert and active. He amused Clara when he first joined the little circle, and Carnation was greatly taken with him during the first week of his stay, though the shrewd little lady afterwards cooled in her liking, explaining to Clara that she had been studying Percy to find out what there was behind so much superficial pleasantry, and had found 'nothing in him, my dear; nothing at all in him.' The elder ladies found him of the greatest use and comfort. They consulted Percy on all matters connected with domestic management, giving parties, and the like; and he gave them decided, clear counsel, and ever ready help. He improved the cookery, and suggested alterations in the house and garden. Everyone invited him, matrons trusted him, and young ladies generally admired. He was invulnerable to satire, and Carnation's occasional arrows fell off him as harmlessly as duck-shot does from the armour of a very large crocodile. No gift is half so valuable for winning popularity as high animal spirits. No other quality or charm is needed by the fortunate possessor of this efficacious endowment. Wit, wisdom, beauty, nobleness are comparatively worthless. They may win slowly a few admirers, but animal spirits secure at once general liking. Is it that the doubts, the sorrows, the sadnesses of life create so much depression that men generally are grateful to the man who, without thought, and without sign or symptom of ever feeling the pressure of life, presents a tonic spectacle of constant, hearty, animal gaiety? Whatever the cause may be, the result is certain. A man who is always radiant with temperamental cheerfulness is universally attractive. He may be selfish as well as shallow, but his popularity will not therefore be diminished. Men with mastery over themselves, self-possessed, and well-balanced, are commonly considered selfish; men, on the other hand, who are effusional and loose of nature, that is, full of self, are popularly looked upon as unselfish. Percy was selfish as well as shallow, but, being himself comfortable, he was ever cheerful, and was looked upon as an unselfish and delightful man of the world.

Mrs. Seymour's cousin, Fred, came down to stop for a short time before going on to Scotland to shoot. He was a handsome young fellow, slightly and finely built, with a smooth cheek and a small dark moustache. His fine silky hair, cut short, was parted in the middle, and he had something of Carnation's brilliancy of complexion, with

the addition of the healthy brown caused by exposure to sun and air. Fred was a soldier. He might, ultimately, turn out a fairly competent one, but was at present in the puppyhood of subalternism. He looked down upon civilians, and measured all things by the standard of 'ours;' but his chief attractions in the army were the hunting, the balls, the betting, the games, and gaming. He gave as little time as might be, and less care than he ought to have done, to the study of his noble profession. He was something supercilious in manner, and had a sense of sulky injury when a civilian presumed to attempt rivalry in the way of flirtation. He thought that ladies were created chiefly for the solace and amusement of officers, and was both surprised and annoyed when 'd——d impertinent fellows' not in the army presumed to make play when he designed to please. He had not a touch of wit or humour; an unfortunate circumstance for him when he tried to flirt with his bewitching but perplexing cousin. His simple talk on the few subjects that interested him was soon exhausted. Carnation liked him, laughed at him, and lectured him; and he confided to her his joys and sorrows, his triumphs, his annoyances, and his debts. He wore an eye-glass in his right eye whenever he remembered to put it up, but always carefully employed this weapon when first he was introduced to strangers. He used to smoke a large meerschaum about the garden; he wanted a B. and S. in the morning; and he was trying to induce his cousin to study billiards.

Oliver Winwood, who had been invited by Clara's brother Charles to visit the family at Fernside, was about eight-and-twenty. After leaving Cambridge, he entered himself at a German university, and thus obtained the two cultures of the two great lands of action and of thought. Having completed his studies in Germany, he resolved, before settling down to a career in England, to travel for a year or two; and a love of adventure, coupled with an old longing for Eastern scenes and sports, impelled him to India, to Australia, to China, Japan, and all the far lands and seas of remote romance. His character was curiously compounded of the contemplative and the active. To borrow Mrs. Seymour's expression, he 'knew Kant and could shoot a tiger.' He was shy and bashful towards women, whom he held in the highest chivalrous respect; but when he became intimate and at his ease with ladies that he liked, the grave and reserved manner which was the ordinary disguise of his sensitive shyness wore off, and they found him fluent, eloquent, impassioned, enthusiastic. Light brown hair curled round a noble head, and a small sunny beard was closely trimmed round a firm yet mobile mouth. He was moderately tall, spare and slight though strong and active, and, like many men who have seen much of danger, he had a kind of self-possessed majesty of

bearing. The face, naturally fair, was darkly burned with the branding suns of many a clime and many an Eastern sea. When in repose his features had something of the calm of an Egyptian statue, but when he became excited they lighted up curiously: the entire expression altered: the grey eye flashed with its inner light, and the whole face became instinct with life, with fire, with emotion. He had the emotional temperament which makes poets, actors, orators. He was a proud man, and his manner towards strangers was held to be even cold; but he was very gentle, frank, gay, and cordial with friends. Clara's brother Charles was one of Oliver's most intimate friends; but Charles had had some little difficulty in inducing Oliver to accept an invitation for a domiciliary visit amongst strangers in a country house.

Another guest was Mr. Prendergast, a literary man. His distinguishing characteristic in literature had been an effort to reconcile physiology with psychology. His 'Romance of the Rectum' had excited a good deal of interest in certain circles, and his second work, 'The Minnesänger of Mincing Lane,' had been successful. He had also written 'Some Thoughts concerning the Biliary Secretions of Marat,' and projected an exhaustive work, in quarto, 'On the Toenails of the Ancient Egyptians.' He was now engaged on the 'Penny Python,' and contemplated starting a new journal, to be devoted to the advocacy of his peculiar views. Moving a good deal in literary and legal circles in London, he had made the acquaintance of Charles Poynton, and had rather insisted upon an invitation to Fernside. Charles thought that he would amuse Carnation and Clara, and had written to his sister a full description of his literary friend; but when announcing his invitation to Oliver, he had merely mentioned, casually, an 'old friend' of his, and had given the ladies no intimation of the manner of man they were to meet. This reticence rather excited their curiosity, because Charles was usually very full and minute in his sketches of new friends. Mr. Prendergast was vain, a little noisy, and could never refrain long from his special hobbies; but he was shrewd, well-informed, and his manner towards strangers had a certain pleasant ease and currency which soon won conventional good-will. He liked to be a 'lion among ladies,' and arrived rapidly at a conviction that pretty Mrs. Seymour thought much more highly of him than she really did. He held the singular opinion that women were the fittest disciples for his distinctive views.

One day, just before the visit to Fernside, Oliver was spending the evening, as he sometimes did, in Charley's chambers. Amongst their bachelor talk, the [subject of love and marriage cropped up, as it always does crop up when bachelors are together. Charley gaily

asked his friend why he did not marry? and Oliver, standing with his back to the fireplace, delivered himself as follows, after his impassioned manner when excited:

‘Those women, now, that we read of in romance and poetry—where are they? do they really exist? Did any man ever meet an Imogen, a Di Vernon, a Dorothea? I never saw a woman who was at all like an ideal. Where am I to find the heroines of literature? If I could find such an one I would marry her directly, if she would have me; but I believe, Charley, that it is all humbug. The poets draw women out of their own imaginations, and render our life miserable because we can’t find divine things which have no real existence. If you urge me to marry, I say, show me one of the great, noble, lovely, lofty women of true poetry. Introduce me to her, and I am her knight, her slave, her lover! But you can’t; and that’s the pity of it, Charley.’

‘Well,’ said Charley, smiling, for he thought that he had found *the* young lady; ‘well, I call that a torrid torrent of rhetorical rhapsody; but I believe that such women do exist. By the way, you go down to Fernside on Thursday? Good; I shall be there a day or two before you, as you can’t go with me.’

Charley had never vouchsafed to his friend any description of Clara, of Carnation, or, indeed, of any of the party that he was to meet at Fernside.

‘Yes,’ said Oliver, ‘I shall come down on Thursday. I can’t get away earlier. I am glad you will be there. I hate going into a strange house without meeting some friend to get me well through my first shyness. Have you heard from Chalkshire?’

‘Oh, I am always hearing something from the dear old county,’ returned Charley. ‘We are very clannish there. Everybody knows everybody, and somebody is always wanted to help anybody who is in a scrape. For instance, here’s a letter from America. A young fellow in our parts went very wild; went to the bad very badly, and disappeared, it was supposed to America. The supposition was right. He now writes to me, begging me to communicate with his friends. He is doing well, it seems: has struck “ile,” and has become eminent in the religious world as a Doubly Seceding Little Tunker. You see we Chalkshire people hold together. But where are you going, Oliver? why go so early?’

‘I am only going round to the club,’ said Oliver, ‘to hear the late news. A club is an omniscience-box of oral current history. Good-bye! I shall see you next at Fernside, Charley.’

‘Good-bye! I hope you won’t fall into the clutches of that bore Fletcher. How I hate his greasy, coaxing way, and affectation of knowing everything. He is always toadying any big man. Some

parks are closed for a month in the year because its "fawning time," but *his* fawning time extends over all the year. Take care of the step. Good-night! Remember, next Thursday at Fernside. I shall expect you to dinner.'

On the Thursday named, Oliver started for Fernside. Leaving the train, and sending on his luggage by the vehicle sent to meet him, he resolved to walk the three or four miles which separate the house from the railway. It was a lovely afternoon, radiant in golden splendour, towards the end of August. The triumphant sea, stirred to ecstasy by the merry breeze of morning, was still leaping and tossing its sun-bright, foamed-ridged waves, wild with playful will, turbulent in its own fierce joy. The glad billows leaped upwards to the smiling sun, until, vexed by the barrier of the confining land, they dashed and fretted against the sturdy coast of dear old Chalkshire.

Oliver strode along, with a springy, rapid step, sometimes looking round at sky, and sea, and scene, and sometimes slashing the roadside grasses with his stick, as he recited half aloud—

Ho! for the brine and the breeze; ho! for the breeze and the brine;
For the wild waves leap, and the fierce winds sweep,
As they meet —

At this stage of his recitation Oliver stopped suddenly, astonished by a Vision. He had for some time been walking uphill, and had reached an abrupt turning in the road. His footsteps on the short grass which fringed the path were noiseless, and, himself unseen, he paused, then slackened his pace, while he gazed with heart and eyes, and with a delight which brought a flush into his cheek, at this vision of a lady.

On the brow of the hill which Oliver had mounted stood an old farmhouse, and there the Vision had drawn bridle, and waited, talking in the gate with Mary Rivers. Behind the fair rider stretched the far off blue sky, and her figure stood out in distinct relief against that immense background of splendour and of light. Her horse stooped down his head to crop the grass by the gate, while the lady, half turning in the saddle, rested one hand on the glossy, sunbright, bay coat behind the saddle, while the other white-gloved hand, with that ineffably graceful bend from the wrist which is so distinctive of a beautiful woman, held lightly the bridle and the whip. The bend and the half turn of the magnificent figure, tightly clothed in the well-fitting dark blue riding-habit, showed the rare beauty of suave and sinuous line from neck and bust to waist. The heavy strands and coils of the thick cable of golden shining hair gleamed under the little hat, and crowned the regal head rising from a shapely neck set in the little

white collar which surrounded the round and slender throat. A neck riband gave one touch of colour to the dark mass of dress. One small foot pointed delicately from out the habit, as sometimes she swayed it to and fro. Her fair, clear-cut, oval face, flushed with a tender rose hue from her rapid gallop through the fresh air, looked nobly lovely as she leaned it down to talk to Mary; and her large hazel eyes, now drooped, now lifted, were bright with the clear, soft light of pure and lofty womanhood. She was, as Oliver instinctively felt, emphatically a lady, and her style of distinguished beauty was distinctively English. In order to avoid needless mystery, I may as well state at once that Oliver's vision was Clara Poynton. Some women look particularly well on horseback. Character has something to do with this suitability to riding; and certainly Clara was a lovely vision as, in her youth and health and beauty, she rode the favourite horse which knew her firm seat and her light hand so well.

Oliver passed on, his whole fancy stirred and occupied by the graceful apparition. He no longer recited as he walked; he ceased to regard the landscape. His thoughts were absorbed by the dream of a fair woman. He thought that he had never seen a woman half so fair; he felt that she was good and noble. He wondered who she was, and whether he should ever see her again. Then came the clatter of a horse's hoofs, and the Vision, with head bent downwards, and without a look towards the wayfarer, flew by him. He caught a last glimpse of the flying skirt, as the fleet horse swept round a wooded corner, and left him lonely with his fancies and his dreams.

Arrived at Fernside, he was heartily welcomed by Charley, who introduced him to everyone in the house.

'Oh, here's Clary!' cried Charley, as a step was heard upon the gravel; and, holding up its habit, the Vision appeared. Oliver could not repress a start and a blush. Charley looked surprised. 'Why I thought you two had never seen each other before,' he said.

'Never, I think,' said Clara, with a smile of sweet unconsciousness.

'Oh, yes, we have met,' returned Oliver, with a slight flush, 'tho' I saw you and you did not see me.'

Pressed for an explanation he became shy and turned the subject; but I have reason to believe that, when sitting next her at dinner, Oliver told Clara of what he termed his adventure of a vision. He always, when strongly moved, spoke with a simple directness, and he did not attempt to conceal the effect which the vision had upon him.

I do not know whether Clara were pleased; but Mrs. Seymour who soon heard the little narrative (she heard everything, always) began to call her friend—Vision.

Oliver, when with Clara and Juliet, lost his shyness. He never remembered to have felt so quickly at his ease with any ladies.

The next day opened with a beautiful summer morning, and the garden of Fernside sparkled gaily in the early sun. A verandah shaded the cool morning room, in which breakfast things stood on the glossy white cloth, colour-gemmed with china and bright with shining metal.

Miss Northcote, who was usually the first to appear, was sitting sewing something when Mrs. Seymour, in her morning bloom and freshness, looking purely cool in a white dress, entered, and began smelling the flowers on the table, and playing with the parrot.

Miss Northcote was considered to possess some facial resemblance to this bird. When these two ladies met alone there was usually a little sparring between them.

Precise Miss Northcote disliked anyone who, like Juliet, went flitting about a room like a humming-bird, and she worried Mrs. Seymour to 'sit down quietly' by the window.

This little fussy piece of annoyance aroused in Carnation one of her naughty provoking moods.

'A parrot, my love, is a very sagacious bird,' observed Miss Northcote. 'It is wonderful to me how they can talk. Sometimes they swear. I don't understand it.'

'I think a parrot looks like a Methodist eagle,' responded defiantly impatient Juliet. 'But how late they are! Why don't they come down to breakfast?'

'My love,' said Miss Northcote, impressively, for she meant the question to lead to others, 'have you heard from your husband lately?'

'Heard from Hugh? How should I? The *Psyche* is somewhere on her way to the Mediterranean, I suppose, and yachts don't post their morning letters regularly.'

'No, I daresay they cannot; indeed, I can see difficulties,' responded Miss Northcote, who was easily satisfied with anything that appeared like an explanation. 'But, my love, do you like your husband to be away from you in that manner?'

'When he goes yachting,' replied Juliet, 'I would sooner that he went without me than with me; because I hate the sea and am always ill. And then Hugh *must* yacht, you know.'

'It is dangerous for a young married lady to be left too much alone,' remarked Miss Northcote, who held a strong private opinion that Juliet flirted much too much. The poor lady could not comprehend that wives may be merry and yet honest too. She had a horror of 'impropriety,' and no conception of the honour, or humour, of her

bright antagonist. 'My dear,' (this was said with great meaning) 'do you think it is right to let your husband go alone?'

'I always assume,' returned Mrs. Seymour, composedly—(she was getting a little nettled)—'I always assume that everyone is always wrong in everything they ever do. By assuming this little postulate, we attain to perfect freedom of action when we want to do right, or to do what we like, which is much the same thing.'

'I really don't understand you, my dear,' said Miss Northcote, dropping her sewing with a puzzled air; 'but it seems very shocking!'

Mrs. Seymour looked simple and grave, but her eyes smiled. The spinster's direct attack was beaten off.

'My love,' resumed Miss Northcote, 'when last I saw your husband, I thought I noticed a little white in his whiskers. Is it so?'

'I trust I know my duty as a wife too well to observe such things,' returned Mrs. Seymour. There was just the least little nasal, religious inflection in her voice as she said this. 'Besides, you know, Miss Northcote, that the chestnut and the hawthorn are never in their fullest glory of beauty until they blossom into white. So, you see, it doesn't matter. Ah, here's Clara!' And the little lady jumped up and kissed her friend with a feeling to which a sense of relief added warmth. Then ensued between the two the low ripple of silver laughter and the murmur of musical voices.

How remarkably pretty women look on a sunny summer morning! Clara and Juliet were pretty women; and this summer morning was sunny.

'What are you reading, *Carnation*? ' asked Clara, as they sat together after breakfast.

'Oh, "Do you Consider her Guilty?"' replied Mrs. Seymour.

'Miss Northcote says she has heard it is a bad book,' remarked Clara.

'Miss Northcote is a stupid person,' returned *Carnation*.

'Yes; but a stupid person may be right sometimes,' pleaded Clara.

'Quite so; as a clock that has stopped is right for one second in the day,' said Juliet, sharply.

'But really, Clara, the book is just the sort of thing that publishers and the public seem to want now from lady writers. It is immoral, but not outspoken; intrinsically foul, but filmed with decorum. But, Clara, I want to ask you a question—how do you like our new guest?'

Here Mrs. Seymour looked at her friend with large interrogative eyes.

'I think I like Mr. Winwood very much,' replied Clara, dreamily.

'It's a fortunate thing for me, Clara, that I'm married,' remarked Mrs. Seymour, with emphasis; 'I like him too.'

'You forget, dear,' answered Clara, in a tone of injury, 'that I am almost as bad. You know, Juliet, that I consider myself half engaged.'

'Heigho! Clary,' said Juliet; 'when a man *is* a man—but they are very rare—why, he is almost irresistible.'

'Is he? I suppose so,' returned Clara, absently. 'Juliet, I heard from Mr. Mainwaring to-day.'

Here Lotty came running up, with flying mane, to show her sister and Mrs. Seymour the effect of some new striped stockings and Molière shoes. The talk was interrupted for the time.

The next morning found the fair friends together at the after-breakfast hour.

'Clara, I like your friend, Mr. Winwood.'

'My friend!' exclaimed Clara.

'Yes, dear, I like him,' continued Mrs. Seymour. 'Do you know, Clary, he has never made love to me at all.'

'Come, Carnation, be reasonable,' returned Clara, smiling; 'you must give the poor fellow time. Remember, he has only been here a day.'

'Oh, my love, I've known men begin quicker than that,' said Mrs. Seymour. 'But, seriously, I think Mr. Winwood is too much in earnest ever to flirt. You are well-named, Santa Chiara; your nature is as clear as your name. You never flirt, or do naughty things, as I do.'

'No,' said Clara, slowly, with introspection in her tone: 'I don't think I ever flirt. But that is no merit: I never feel any temptation.'

'Only think how absurd that Fred is!' resumed Mrs. Seymour, gaily; 'I gave him yesterday, when I was out sketching with my flock, my heavy camp-stool to carry for at least two or three miles, and yet he wasn't satisfied. Jealous of Mr. Prendergast and of that curate! It's too amusing, Clara.'

'Charley thinks very highly of his friend, Mr. Winwood,' said Clara, who was very grave and tender in manner that morning. 'He often praises Oliver to me. I am glad to make his acquaintance. I think I shall like him as a friend. I am very glad, Carnation, that Mr. Mainwaring is not here.' This was said with a blush.

'The train that backs is on the wrong rails,' responded Mrs. Seymour, enigmatically and sententiously. Here she hummed:

Go back, my lord, across the moor;
You are not her darling.

'But I see Mr. Winwood. He seems as if he were looking for some one. Let us go into the garden. Oh, Clary! what a distraught air

he has. I declare that, like a modern Dante, he looks like a man who has seen a vision.'

'Nonsense, Juliet,' said Clara, severely. 'But we may as well go into the garden.'

And they went.

Clara and Juliet were fond of talking with Oliver.

'Like two Desdemonas, my dear, listening to a fair Othello,' remarked Mrs. Seymour one day when Oliver, at Clara's request, had been telling, eloquently, of moving accidents by flood and field.

They generally got him into their favourite garden arbour after breakfast. With sweet and sympathetic women he felt poetry and he talked poetry, or impassioned truth. He was full of rare and delicate enthusiasms, of that strain of feeling which finds its truest response in the high and tender nature of pure and noble women. It was *seiner Rede Zauberfluss* that first attracted Clara to Oliver. The two ladies soon found that if others joined the trio in the arbour, Oliver ceased to talk. He relapsed into his coldly-polite and rather absent manner. He said a few stiff words on indifferent subjects, and generally stole away from the circle, leaving the field open to the other admirers of the two beauties. Now, conversation with such a man as Oliver is a deep delight to women such as Clara and Juliet—women who, in the common social intercourse of life, so seldom have the imagination excited or the heart touched. They therefore manœuvred to get Oliver to themselves when they could, and they often succeeded, especially in the summer mornings when country guests disperse in search of country amusements. Our liking for strangers is dependent upon the degree in which they satisfy our secret ideal of excellence; and it had never yet happened to Clara to meet with a man who had at all realised the ideal in her own mind which, though she was unconscious of its existence, yet lay latent in her nature. In Oliver she found the completion of her ideal. She had drifted into a half-engagement with Mr. Mainwaring, scarcely recognising the fact that she did not love. In the absence of a true love she had yielded passively to circumstance; but she had within her the capacity of a great and noble love, and when her true mate appeared, love woke in her in glory and in strength.

Oliver gradually and slowly became rather popular among the male members of the little Fernside community, although they, I fancy, liked him rather for his physical excellences than for his spiritual qualities. He was the best shot, the best rider, the best fencer and boxer at Fernside, and he could endure more fatigue than any other man there. Men always have a tendency to admire genuinely physical

supremacy in strength, skill, and courage; and Oliver, in his many wanderings, had acquired a coolness in danger which enabled his valour to act in safety and with success. Fred was not a little elated when he found that he could beat Oliver at billiards, and Percy Nugent rejoiced exceedingly when he could get a hit of Oliver with the foils. Mr. Prendergast considered him 'a dangerous man to tackle' upon literary subjects; but he did not like Oliver the better on that account. Charley was always a warm admirer of his friend, and enjoyed generously any triumph which he could induce Winwood to achieve. It was characteristic of Oliver that he was generally unwilling to engage in any contest for supremacy; but, once in and once excited, his temperament impelled him to the efforts which ensured success. For women with whom he did not desire to become intimate his high-bred courtesy had an unfailing charm, but they generally regarded him as rather cold and unapproachable. By a necessity of his nature, he had two lives: the one in which he realised sympathy and felt at his ease—cordial, hearty, impassioned; the other in which he stood upon polite reserve—punctilious, courteous, but distant.

The growth of great things is gradual. Clara loved Oliver before she suspected that she loved, and time alone ripened in her the consciousness of love. When she knew that her fate had come, she was tormented by the sense of a hampering engagement which she felt at once that she could never keep. Having once known love, she could never marry unless she loved. The charm of the vision seen on his way to Fernside had struck so strongly upon Oliver's fancy that it seemed to him but a natural consequence when he found that, with intimacy, his heart opened wide to receive its new and great delight. Proud, diffident, and reserved, he hesitated for a time to speak of love; but Mrs. Seymour knew his secret soon and well, and Clara, too, knew that she was loved, though she would not admit to herself the knowledge of the truth. Her father was a man who, Clara knew, would oppose a breach of the half-engagement with Mainwaring; and her mother also looked with great favour upon the match. Charley alone had always opposed it, and had stoutly maintained that Mainwaring, though a good fellow enough, was not worthy of their Clara. He might be relied on; but Clara had a still more valuable—indeed, an invaluable—ally in her friend Carnation, who was an invincible, irresistible little woman, and who soon made up *her* mind that Clara should have Oliver.

So things went on for many days at Fernside, until a chance occurrence brought about an irrevocable step.

The Poyntons had, as it happened, amongst their neighbours a very musical family, and this family was addicted to giving musical

evenings, to which everyone of its acquaintances was imperiously bidden.

One of these evenings was about to occur, and the Poyntons were driven into promising to attend and to bring their guests.

This promise was announced by Mrs. Poynton at breakfast, who expressed a hope that everyone that could go would be kind enough to attend.

Mrs. Seymour made a wry face. She did not appear to like the musical family, or to anticipate much pleasure from their music or society. Pressed by Fred and Percy Nugent, she gave one of her wicked satirical sketches of the two ladies who had called with the invitation.

'The eldest daughter—you know, the one with the rather hollow cheeks—in addition to her mastery of the piano, and her admitted excellence on the triangle, beats the drum, and can play a symphony on the trombone.'

'Oh, let's go,' cried Percy; 'there's sure to be some fun.'

'Sure to be some nice girls there,' remarked Fred. 'Those Howard girls are stunning, and are very rich.'

'I need not go,' said Oliver; 'the invitation can scarcely have been meant to include me.'

'Yes, yes,' replied Mrs. Seymour, dictatorially; 'you must go, of course, Mr. Winwood. They want all the audience they can get. Besides, if it's dull, Clara and I will want you to amuse us.'

So it was settled that Fernside should 'assist' at the *soirée*, and after dinner they started. The house to which they were going was about a mile from Fernside, and Fred kept the men so long over the after-dinner cigar in the garden before starting that they arrived rather late, and when the music was in full flow.

They entered the room of the musical family just as the curate had completed a *fantasia* on the flute. The mother, a very stout elderly lady, with a mottled face surmounted by a reddish-brown 'front,' was busy distributing the music for a glee. A daughter presided at the piano. The mother, a thin young lady with a red aquiline nose, a long gentleman in spectacles, and a light-haired, spoffish young fellow, who sang bass, arranged themselves round the instrument, and commenced the cough of preparation. A little rustling of leaves, one or two inquiries, 'Are you ready?' and the piano was off. They sang the well-known glee expressive of woman's devotion to a gentleman of the bandit persuasion, and popular, with music to correspond, under the title of—

And my soul shall love thee ever,
With the blood brand on thy brow.

They stumbled a little at first, owing to the circumstance that the bass commenced at the second page, but he harked back, and they then got on reasonably well together. They were soon lashed up into the dramatic fury and passion proper to the inspiration of the scald. The large watch outside the silk dress of the very stout lady was violently convulsed, and flapped up and down like a knocker played upon by 'spirits.' The bass, though slow in his delivery, was individually noticeable; and the voices rose and fell, more or less together, as the fervid words healed and rang. The piano got excited, being of a feverish temperament, and forged a little ahead. The glee proceeded—

And my so-wo-wole shall l-h-huve thee e-ver,
With the blood brand o-o-o-n thy brow—

and just at its close, Mrs. Seymour, complaining of heat, went into the garden, into which she was followed by Clara and Oliver. *They* heard no more of the concert.

Several of the Fernside party walked home. The night was warm and beautiful, and a nearly full moon made silver light and tender shade on grass, on tree, on winding road, while a broad path of glory streamed upon an ocean track of weltering waves. Somehow, Oliver and Clara walked with lingering steps together. Mrs. Seymour collected her followers, and their merry voices and laughter rang thro' the still and shining night. The lovers were alone. The scene, the hour, the solitude, all combined, until the heart's great impulse broke love's first tender silence, and Clara knew woman's great happiness at hearing, in passion and in poetry, that she is loved by him she wholly loves.

The musical party which had at first excited the irony of Mrs. Seymour had resulted in furthering her views and in expediting the declaration which she so much desired.

After that happy evening—an evening which would have and hold its distinct place thro' life in the memories of both—there came for Oliver and for Clara the happiest time that human life can know. In the fair summer season, in that charming scenery, and in that pleasant country house, with the time a holiday, and with the whole day to spend together, the lovers were intensely, deeply happy. Then, in that dream-time of first noble love, for them :—

A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

All life becomes ideal, higher, holier. But why describe? Imagination transcends description. If once we know and realise their

characters, then it is easy to imagine the love between woman and man. Love is the highest outcome of the highest beings; and if we can gauge the height of natures, we can fancy the silent rapture of their first romance of love.

Just at this juncture, Oliver was summoned to his father, who was seized with a serious illness. He left Fernside unwillingly, because his relations towards Clara, tho' clear enough with Clara herself, were not on a quite clear footing with her relations. He had hoped himself to have fought out the fight and to have saved Clara, but his anxiety in leaving at such a time was greatly lessened by his reliance upon the zeal and the promises of Mrs. Seymour.

There is always something valueless and uninteresting in the narrative of any course of action which resembles intrigue; and I shall, therefore, touch but very lightly upon the measures (which, indeed, are but imperfectly known to me) which Mrs. Seymour adopted to attain her end. The indomitable little lady worked with unflagging zeal and with an almost feverish activity. She was not likely to fail. She had great difficulty with Mr. Poynton, but he ultimately succumbed to his fair antagonist. Mrs. Poynton resisted while her husband opposed, but approved when he yielded. The matter was a delicate one as respected Mainwaring. He had been away from home for some time, and so soon as Clara received an announcement that he would return on a certain day, she told Mrs. Seymour that she should ride over to Braxton and see him alone. This line of conduct was like frank and fearless Clara, but Mrs. Seymour knew well that her friend was nerving herself for a terrible effort. She approved Clara's proposal; but when she heard Miss Poynton ordering her horse to ride over to Braxton, Mrs. Seymour procured Pegasus to be attached to the pony carriage, and, without telling anyone of her intention, determined to see Mr. Mainwaring before Clara should arrive. She knew that Mainwaring was, in the main, good-natured and generous; she did not believe that he was really capable of love, and she had an unlimited belief in her own capacity for fascinating diplomacy. She herself held the belief that she would have made a first-class ambassador's wife. On this occasion she utterly refused the attendance of all her male admirers; but in order to fill up the vacant seat she was compelled to admit Lotty into the carriage.

Clara's younger sister, Miss Lotty, was aged about twelve or thirteen. Lotty was a pretty little girl, full of high spirits, and generally in mischief. A leonine shock of fair hair floated and waved upon her shoulders, and she had merry, romping eyes. She was of a candid disposition, and very fond of currants.

The Poyntons had a fat, handsome, brown pony, who was rather

slow and lazy. His stable name was Bob, but Mrs. Seymour was pleased to christen him Pegasus. She did not like riding, but preferred driving Pegasus about the country. Sometimes Fred went with her, but then he always wanted to drive too fast. Lotty also drove out with Mrs. Seymour, and was indignant because she was not allowed to drive. The fact was, Miss Lotty had once upset the pony-chaise in a ditch by the Holme Farm, and Mrs. Seymour had been informed of the circumstance. Therefore, when to-day Juliet declined to give up the reins to Lotty, and explained her reasons, the young lady said, poutingly, 'Oh, you've heard of that, have you? There was no harm done. Who told you? Clara? Well, it was very unkind of her to tell. Such things should never be talked of out of the family. I suppose I'm never to drive again just because of that stupid little accident. I'm sure I can drive as well as anybody—except Fr  d.' Hence it came that Mrs. Seymour was driving home, when Clara, riding thoughtfully and ill at ease to Mainwaring's house to get over her terrible interview, saw the pony-chaise afar off on the road. To her surprise, she readily obtained from Mainwaring a kindly and a generous release. The dreaded visit passed off well. It would almost seem, Clara thought, as if Mainwaring had been prepared. Mrs. Seymour did not appear to see her equestrian friend. No one ever knew what passed between Mrs. Seymour and Mainwaring at their most delicate interview.

There were, it is probable, other flirtations and little love matters beside that of Oliver and of Clara going on at the same time at Fernside. If there were, Mrs. Seymour knew all about them, but I do not intend to become their chronicler. Benvolio, Mercutio, Tybalt had certainly their own *amours*; but the poet devotes all his strength to depicting the nobler passion of Romeo and of Juliet, and leaves his other gentlemen with their loves unsung.

At length all difficulties were surmounted, in Oliver's absence, by his faithful ally, Mrs. Seymour; and he had the pleasure of receiving a letter from that lively lady, from which we are permitted to make an extract:—

'*Eureka!*—no, that's not the word; that means a shirt, I know. I mean that other Greek word—you know him—which implies that, somehow, something has come out just as you wish it. Well, your difficulties are all removed; and I must say, Mr. Winwood, that my vanity glows with a sense of triumph at the success of my diplomacy. There, sir, there's vanity for you! Clara is more beautiful than ever since she has been in love. I think you are the happiest fellow in the world to win Clara—except that she is as happy in winning you. The dear Vision is quite well, and you will, no doubt, receive an

autograph letter from her by the same post. When you see the two writings I know which letter you will read first! Now, sir, if I were you, I should come down at once to see her—that is, so soon as you can leave your father. Mind that—that's my advice to you. My dear old Hugh will be back directly, and I—I must leave Fernside at once. Now, I am vain enough to hope that when you come here you will miss me just a little. But then you will be so happy with Clara. I shall not see you until you are married; but God bless you both! Now I will give you some Chalkshire news. The Mainwarings are all going to Italy. Fred and Charley had a great day's shooting yesterday. Mr. Prendergast and Percy Nugent have left us. Miss Northcote has a bad cold and is laid up. There has been a fire at Mistleigh Hall. Lucy Gargrave has a little girl. The Hutchinsons have a house full, and Henrietta says——.' But we need not transcribe more of Mrs. Seymour's letter. When it reached Oliver his father was so much better that he intended to start for Fernside at once.

The day came on the morning of which Mrs. Seymour was to leave Fernside, on the evening of which Oliver was to return to it; and the two friends sat together once more in the dear old arbour. Mrs. Seymour seemed out of spirits; but that might arise from leaving Clara. Clara's white hand twined round an errant spray of twining clematis, and then she sat down in her old seat and looked at her friend.

'Oh, Juliet—dear, dear Juliet!' said Clara, radiant with the fulness of her great happiness; 'I am so happy! and I owe so much, so very much, to you. Until I met and knew Oliver, I did not know what love meant. I know now, Juliet; and the more I think of it the better I know what I—what we—owe to you!'

Mrs. Seymour clung suddenly round Clara's neck, and hid her face on Clara's breast. Clara could hear that she was sobbing.

'Oh, Clara, I am so glad—I am so happy! I know that you will be so very happy. But, Clara, I am just going; kiss me, Clara! God forgive me! and you, too, forgive me, Clara! Oh, Clara, I—I loved him too!'

THE AZORES.

HAVING lived for three years at St. Michael's, the largest island of the Azores, and never having, since my return, met anyone who seemed either to have heard of, or to know anything of, these beautiful islands, I feel induced to write about them that Englishmen, who so often seek for health at a much greater distance, may know that they pass by a spot where they would find all that they could possibly wish for.

The Azores (or Açores, more properly), so called from being the home of innumerable hawks, are a group of nine islands situated in the Atlantic, between 37 deg. and 40 deg. north latitude, and 25 deg. to 32 deg. west longitude, about half-way between the Old and New World. St. Michael's and St. Mary's (S. Miguel and Santa Maria) are the two most easterly, the latter being about seventy miles due south, and in sight of the former. Then, going westerly, we reach Terceira, so called from being the third island discovered; St. George (S. Jorge) and Gracioça; then Fayal and Pico, and, still further westward, Corvo and Flores. The derivation of the names of these islands may not be uninteresting. St. Michael's, St. Mary's, and St. George derive their appellations, as their titles show, from the fact of their discovery having been made upon the days sacred to those saints. Terceira I have already mentioned. Gracioça takes its name from a word meaning 'beautiful,' and truly the island is justly worthy of the title. Corvo (crow) takes its name from 'crows,' being the only island in the group where these birds are to be found. Flores, delighting in a profusion of flowers, takes its name therefrom. Lastly, Fayal takes its title from the word 'fayah,' meaning 'beech,' the island being noted for an abundance of these trees; and Pico (peak), from its altitude above its eight companions. The islands were first discovered, it is said, in the year 1439, by John Vandenberg, a merchant of Bruges, when driven by stress of weather. On his return to Lisbon, he boasted of his discovery to the Portuguese, who thereupon took possession, and have kept them till the present day.

St. Michael's, to which island I shall generally refer, is the largest of the group, as I have said, being about eighty-two miles in length and averaging eight to ten miles in width, and stretches from east to west. The principal town in the island, Ponta Delgada (narrow point), is situated on the south side of the island, about nineteen miles from the most western point. This town is built in a sheltered position, caused by a chain of sugar-loaf-shaped hills, running through, and culminating at the eastern end of the island in a mountain called Pico de Vara. Ponta Delgada is the third largest town in the Portuguese dominions, ranking next to Lisbon and Oporto, and enjoys a first-rate trade with England, Brazil, and the States. During the winter months, if winter it can be called there, the roadstead is filled with vessels, both steam and sailing, waiting for their cargoes of oranges, the trade in which fruit forms the staple supply of the island, and the export duty on which contributes no small revenue to the coffers of the Minister of Finance. The town is built in a long, straggling fashion, extending from end to end about two miles. Near and around it are its most pleasant adjuncts, the Orange Quintas (Gardens), which, for splendid luxuriance and delicious odour, well repay alone a visit to this 'Insula Fortunata.' The Cathedral, situated in a square in the midst of the town, is a fine building, equalling in size some of our smaller cathedral piles. Close by, we come to the Custom House (Alfandega), where business to a vast extent, to judge from appearances, is daily carried on. Then (an important affair to a stranger) we pass on to the 'Hôtel Central,' which was, when I was at the island, kept by a most obliging person, who, fortunately, spoke English fluently, and had, as if for the especial benefit of English lady-travellers, married a most amiable and kind Englishwoman, who had, I believe, gone to the island in the capacity of housekeeper to a former consul. Ponta Delgada boasts, too, a very nice little theatre, where a good company holds sway, and where occasionally a Spanish Opera Company enlivens the monotony by some capitally-rendered music. Shops also are in abundance, and everything, from a button to a silk dress, may be obtained, though, on account of duty, at a somewhat higher price than in England. French goods are mostly offered for sale, but native cloth, which is very cheap, supplies a fair-wearing material. There is also a well-managed club, from which foreigners are not excluded. The shops of the 'boticas' (chemists) are the favourite lounging resorts of the 'dolce-far-niente' seekers, in lieu of the luncheon-bars, club-rooms, and hotel-lobbies of England. It is certainly a cheap plan to gossip at the chemists', as one can hardly be expected to pay his footing by calling for refreshment there! There is also a very neatly-built English chapel, standing in a small cemetery,

but at present, I regret to say, there is no chaplain. To a sportsman, also, the neighbourhood of the town is especially attractive, there being an abundance of quail, and there *not* being, as at home, any game licence or trespass questions. It may here be noted that, though this island abounds in quail, and has a fair sprinkling of woodcock and snipe, yet there is not a partridge to be found; whereas at St. Mary's, close by, there is a plenitude of partridge (red-legged), and no quail at all. This may, perhaps, be accounted for by the fact that the quails and partridges are enemies, since the quails, producing their broods earlier than partridges, destroy the eggs of the latter.

I must now ask my readers to accompany me on an imaginary trip through this lovely island, when we will traverse the south side towards the east, and will return to Ponta Delgada by the north road. Suppose, then, a peculiar species of vehicle, half britska, half phaeton, to which four mules are harnessed by leather straps, rope, or, in fact, anything which comes most handy, to be drawn up at the door of the hotel, awaiting your pleasure to depart. These mules are driven or bestrode by boys, who are clad in a most incongruous garb; in fact, the whole turn-out is, to say the least of it, most singular and peculiar. But you will, if you exercise the 'paçiência' (patience) which the boys aforementioned are constantly impressing upon you, find that your animals are, 'if rum-ones to look at, yet good ones to go;' and, having taken your seat and safely bestowed your luncheon basket (a necessity, indeed, since nothing eatable is to be obtained on the road), you are whirled off, amidst the yellings and grimaces of an admiring crowd, through those streets which lead to the southern road. Clearing the town and outskirts, which are by no means inviting, the road running between high stone walls, we come to the village of Lioramente, where the road for the north side of the island diverges from the southern track; nothing of importance to be noted save, perhaps, a quaint little chapel which, as it were, guards the point of divergence of the two roads. On we travel, meeting mules laden with orange-boxes going to the town; bullock carts, filled with Indian corn, creaking and lumbering along; a noisy rabble of children; and, perhaps, the village priest. The sea, stretched out on our right hand, and the groves of orange and lemon trees, together with the lofty 'fayah' (beech trees) planted to protect from the wind their weaker brethren, the 'larangeiras,' (orange trees) sloping down from the hill-sides towards the road upon which you are travelling, form at once a most pleasing and grateful view. The bluff rocky headlands over which your road leads you, with the blue sea dashing against them, contrasted with the beauteous tints of green, white, and yellow of the orange trees, form, truly, a picture of which nature might be proud. It may

be asked where our journey is going to end. Well, we are wending our way towards the summer residence of the majority of the gentry of the island, viz., to the village of Furnas, situated in the heart of a valley in the mountains, some 1800 feet from the sea-level. Of the beauties and healthful advantages of this place we will speak hereafter. We still journey on along the sea-coast, through the straggling village of Lagõa and the town of Agua de Pao, till we arrive at Villa Franca, which, like Ponta Delgada, is nestled in a nook under the mountains, and presents a face to the sea. This town was the capital, and contains some fine buildings. Its neighbourhood boasts some of the finest orange Quintas in the island; but, by little and little, Ponta Delgada sprung up, and from being more accessible from most parts of the island, and more adapted for the shipment of fruit, finally took the lead and became the chief place. There is, close off Villa Franca, a small island, or rock, which, in certain weather, affords an excellent shelter, and which, by being connected with the mainland, would form the basis of large and safe dock-works. The attempts which have been and are being made to construct a dock and breakwater at Ponta Delgada, have as yet but partially succeeded, from the fact that the gales of winter sweep away the summer's work, the stones which form it being partially of lava deposit, and hence very light. Vessels which have anchored within the shelter of this breakwater have remained there in fancied security for a time; but some have been utterly wrecked in the first heavy south-west gale they have encountered, being caught in a trap; and being neither able to get out, nor protect themselves when in, are dashed to pieces by the masses of falling rock, and hurled ashore by the hundreds of tons of water which rush headlong against the opposing structure.

At Villa Franca we are compelled to leave our conveyance, as the track beyond, though called a carriage road, is hardly fitted for anything except a horse, mule, or donkey. We are therefore obliged to hire 'bourras' (donkeys), and, being mounted with a 'bourriqueiro' attendant on each animal, off we start, at a donkey's pace, along the road leading from Villa Franca to Ponta Garcia, and thence to the foot of the 'Guytara,' a mountain ridge over which we must scramble before we can hope to enjoy the beauties of the Furnas Valley. After jogging along for about two hours, we at last commenced the ascent, and ridge after ridge comes on in seemingly never-ending succession, till at last you are told, if you know the language—and, if not, it is intimated to you by signs—that you have reached the summit, and that your would-be haven is below you. After taking a little refreshment, which the exhausting efforts of climbing well deserve, and taking in the view all round, the descent is commenced. Downward

you go, till you find yourself on a fine level piece of road which leads you to the Lagöa das Furnas (Lake of the Furnas), a piece of water about four miles in circumference, and which is entirely surrounded by mountains. This lake, the largest in the island, is supposed, like the others, to have been formed by volcanic eruption, since pumice-stone in great abundance is found on its shores, and tepid springs surround its banks. Near this lake at the north end are some of the famous 'Caldeiras' (boilers), which may be termed the vents of the continual volcanic fires to which all these islands, save one (St. Mary's) are subjected. These Caldeiras are filled, and are constantly boiling over, with water of a mineral nature, which, when cold or tepid, forms an invaluable remedy for gout, rheumatism, and various other diseases. Some of the springs which shoot up around these boiling vents are of almost ice-cold water, and, being of a chalybeate and mineral nature, form a most pleasant and healthful drink. Strange as it may appear to find hot and cold streams or jets pouring from the bosom of the earth within a few paces of each other, yet their subterraneous courses may be far apart, and be prosecuted under widely different circumstances, the one percolating through substances which occasion the evolution of heat, or rising up from an immense depth, where it has been heated by interior fires; and the other confined entirely to the superficial strata.

We pass on now along the borders of the lake, and after diverging towards the east, through a pass in the mountains, at last find ourselves in the valley of the Furnas. We jog on till we arrive at the hotel, for they boast one even here, and make acquaintance with the burly landlord, Senhor Jeronymo, who speaks a few words of English, and he thus endeavours to discover and minister to our wants. After bespeaking beds (for it is impossible to return the same night, having already journeyed nearly forty miles), ordering refreshment, and settling, after a great amount of haggling and chaffering, with our donkey-drivers, we go out to view the magnificent scenery, and to revivify our tired limbs by a warm iron bath!—a warm bath of iron water, taken from the warm iron stream which runs through the valley. The reason for this iron stream may be that there are varieties of pyrites which are converted into sulphate of iron by the contact of water, an evolution of heat accompanying the change, and, supposing a spring to flow through a bed of such pyrites, its waters become thermal and wholly impregnated by such a decomposition. The baths are built close around the boiling springs, which are at the end of the valley, and can be enjoyed for the remuneration of a few pence to the bath-keeper. There are also private baths, built of marble and fine stone, which belong exclusively to some of the wealthy inhabitants of the

island. These springs, said to be connected by underground sources with those I have already mentioned on the borders of the lake in the valley above, consist of iron water (*agua do ferro*), bitter water (*agua azeda*), mixed water, composed by nature of mixed chemicals (*agua mistura*), and various other waters, which are all of especial benefit to invalids. The Americans have been fortunate enough, for their own sakes, to discover the valuable remedies contained in these waters, and take advantage of the healing qualities contained in the baths, the climate, mild and salubrious, and in the enjoyment of the lovely scenery. English people, on the contrary, will not desert their pet Madeira, Nice, Mentone (deserving as they may be), and all those other places famed for expenses and society. Society is more to our countrymen than health; and I often, when speaking of the advantages and beauty of the Azores, am stopped short by the query, 'What sort of society is there?' Of course to those to whom society, in all its phases and forms, is a *sine quâ non*, St. Michael's offers no charms; but to those who seek health, freedom from pain, bodily elasticity, and mental vigour, in lieu of sickness and enervating debility, St. Michael's, and the Azores generally, will be found a Paradise.

To persons, also, to whom economy is an object, the Azores offer especial attractions. Fish, consisting of turtle, grey and red mullet, eels, sardines, and various kinds of well-known, delicious, deep-sea qualities, may be bought at a marvellously low figure. I myself have purchased a turtle for *one shilling*, and a hundred sardines for *three-pence*. House-rent, too, is not expensive; fuel is almost useless, except for cooking purposes, when brushwood, which is very cheap, answers every end; meat is obtainable at 5d. to 6d. per lb., and wine at low prices. Fruit and vegetables are almost given away. Servants' wages, too (a startling item in England), are about 5s. to 7s. 6d. per month; the name of 'perquisites' is unknown; and whereas English domestics require meat, tea, sugar, beer, and various other luxuries, Portuguese servants know nothing of such demands. A little soup with a piece of Indian corn bread, a little salt fish, and an orange or two, form a magnificent repast in the opinion of the Portuguese domestic. But space will not permit us to linger. We must hie back to Ponta Delgada, and this time by the north route, which runs straight, over hill and down dale, into the valley of the Furnas, and is a good carriage road all the way to Ponta Delgada. We can take advantage of a returning carriage, and bargain for places. After climbing the ascent from the valley, our mules bundle along at a merry pace, down hill all the way, straight across the island, and then, after reaching the northern coast line, we take the road westerly, towards the town of Ribeira Grande. The same style of beautiful scenery

meets our gaze as did on the southern road, and, after lunching at Ribeira Grande, we again cross the island, and find ourselves once more at the hotel in Ponta Delgada.

Another journey westerly which may be made with advantage is that to the 'Sette Cidades' (seven cities), a valley surrounded by seven peaks, and which also contains a large lake.

A few words may now be said about the fruit for which the Azores are so famous. The orange tree, which is either raised from slips or seed, produces a crop sometimes startling in abundance. The seedling tree, which takes the longest time to arrive at perfection, is, nevertheless, the most prolific bearer, and stands good for fruit for many decades of years. The tree raised from cutting is, on the other hand, much weaker in its growth and more sparing in its produce. The trees are planted in groves, which are surrounded by high stone walls, and further protected from the force of the wind by lines, sometimes double, of 'fayah' (beech) trees, planted inside the walls. These 'protection' trees grow to a great height, and completely shelter the fruit-bearing trees within. The orange season commences about November, and all is business and work—picking, packing, and shipping—till April, when the last cargoes are dispatched, and nothing remains but to loosen the soil around the roots of the trees, manure them, and patiently await a next crop. In summer, however, fruit is to be obtained. Some trees bear what are called the 'ridolha' fruit, a species of second crop, and so the inhabitants get oranges all the year round. One of the most pleasing sights is the orange tree, with its dark green leaves, white blossom, unripe and ripe fruit, all pendent at the same time. The orange, too, of St. Michael is especially luscious, and is deservedly well known in English markets. It has been in such request that tradesmen often offer Mediterranean fruit for sale as being the far-famed produce of St. Michael. The way, however, to detect the imposition is to examine the covering of the orange—the Mediterranean fruit being always covered with thin white paper, the Azores orange with the leaf of the Indian corn. The skin, too, of the latter is softer, thinner, and of a much finer texture than that of the former. In this lovely climate, where the cold of winter is never felt, and the heat of summer is constantly tempered by the refreshing sea breezes, everything springs into life. The bearded wheat, barley, and Indian corn are cultivated in great abundance, and quantities of the latter grain are exported to the United Kingdom. The fruits of England—such as apples, pears, plums, nectarines, peaches, &c.,—may be seen growing side by side with the more tropical productions, such as the guava, custard apple, Cape gooseberry, and loquots (a fine Australian fruit); and vegetables of all kinds and

descriptions may be found, together with melons of all names and qualities, from the choice little nutmeg even to the ordinary water-melon.

The formation of the Azores (St. Mary's excepted) is strictly volcanic. At St. Mary's there is no sign at all of any such form, and lime and chalk, which are never found in volcanic strata, are discoverable at, and in fact exported from, St. Mary's in great quantities. A chain of volcanic action traverses the whole of the southern part of the European continent a distance of above one thousand geographical miles. It commences at the Azores and extends to the Caspian Sea, having for its northern boundaries the Tyrolean and Swiss Alps, and for its southern bounds the northern kingdoms of Africa. The consequence follows that springs displaying violent ebullitions, sending off vast clouds of steam, and throwing up their scalding water to a considerable height in the form of a jet, are the common phenomena of these volcanic regions. As I have mentioned, in St. Michael's there is a round, deep, and lovely valley, its sides covered with myrtles, laurels, and mountain-grapes, with wheat, Indian corn, and poplars waving upon its fields, in which many boiling fountains occur. The principal 'Caldeira' is on a gentle eminence by the side of a small streamlet, and boils with great fury, and the stream itself exhibits ebullition in various places, where the water is too hot to be borne by the hand. Further, to show the volcanic nature of the Azores, some small islands have emerged from the deep, consisting of volcanic products, lava, scorïæ, and pumice, and of strata uplifted by the expansive force which produced the ejection of these materials. The first marine ebullition on record was in 1538, another took place in 1720, and a third in 1787, when an earthquake shook the island St. George, and eighteen small islets rose near its shores. The next took place in 1811, when the temporary island of Sabrina rose from the deep off St. Michael. A dangerous shoal was first thrown up from a depth of 240 feet in the month of February. In June, the island showed itself above the surface of the sea, and continued rapidly to increase for several days, till it attained the height of 300 feet, and was about a mile in circumference. It had a beautiful crater, with an opening 30 feet wide, from which hot water poured into the sea. In the month of October of the same year the island began gradually to disappear, and by the end of February, 1812, no trace of it was visible above the waves, though vapours occasionally rose from the spot. There is now upwards of 600 feet of water where Sabrina formerly stood. The last ebullition took place off Terceira, between that island and Graciosa, the shock which produced it destroying a church and part of a village in the former island.

This occurred during my residence at St. Michael's. Volcanic formations consist principally of lava, or melted rock-matter, which is either upheaved by immense mechanical pressure through the hollow interior, so as to flow from the top of the volcano in eruption, or, as is usually the case, it makes for itself lateral passages on the flanks of the mountain, and overspreads the adjacent districts, sometimes to a considerable distance, filling up valleys, diverting the course of streams, and elevating plains by adding broad and thick expanses of material to them. Lava is chiefly composed of the two minerals, felspar and augite, with titaniferous iron. When the felspar predominates, light-coloured lavas are the result, called felspathic, or trachytic; but when the augite is in excess, dark varieties, augitic or basaltic lavas, are produced.

But to resume. It may be, and with justice, asked—How are we to get to these realms of Eden? In the winter months there are always very comfortable steamers sailing from London and Liverpool weekly in which there is capital accommodation for passengers: fare, about £10. In the summer months, Southampton to Lisbon; and thence, on the 15th of the month, by the regular mail-boat to St. Michael's and other islands will be the best route. The coinage in the islands differs slightly from the Lisbon rates. In Portugal the £1 sterling is worth 4500 reis; in the island, 5600 reis. But there is no actual gain by the exchange, as money is rated higher in Lisbon than in the Azores. English Bank-notes can hardly obtain currency. A rei is almost an imaginary coin, a 'cincoreis' (5 reis) piece being the lowest coinage.

With reference to scenery, I may add that the other islands equally deserve the eulogiums I have passed on the beauties of St. Michael's; and Pico may be especially noted as being the only island in which volcanic eruption is still active.

It may be a matter of interest to know that the far-famed 'Mar de Sargosso' (weedy sea), which is divided into two sections, is situated a little to the west of the meridian of Fayal, between 25 degs. and 36 degs. of latitude, where it forms a vast marine meadow. It is caused by an immense collection of floating sea-weed (*fucus natans*). It is said to have been discovered by the Phœnicians.

Another important topic, and I have finished. The falling-off of the crop of grapes, which formerly, in the shape of wine, supplied one of the principal export commodities from the islands, is a matter of deep regret. For some years past there has been no crop, so to speak, the whole of the grapes for wine-making purposes having been destroyed by the 'coccus,' a species of green fly, and by the 'oidium,' a kind of blight, which rots the stem as soon as the grape

is formed. The 'coccus' eats away the strength of the vine, and leaves it an easier prey to the ravages of 'öidium.'

Wine, however ('termo tinto' and 'termo branco'), a kind of red and white, may be obtained at the Azores at a most reasonable price, being sent from Lisbon. 'Bucellas,' and wines of a higher quality, are also to be had in the islands from the same source. A kind of white brandy, made at St. George, is of a first-rate nature, and very cheap. I am surprised, indeed, that it has not been made a subject of import to England to take the place of the cheap and nasty liquors which are so constantly vended there.

There can be no doubt that all those who require rest, renovation, change, and an economical trip, will never regret having paid a visit to the AZORES.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

BY AN INSPECTOR OF RETURNS.

Most of us probably hear and read a great deal about progress. There seems to be a class of people who have taken progress under their own special protection, and are determined that the world shall know what they have done. To adopt a metaphor of their own one might suppose that progress is the property of a joint-stock company in which these people are the only shareholders, and that they are more than usually anxious to cry up the shares, though not with any intention of disposing of them. And if success is to be ensured by constantly proclaiming that it has already been attained, then they are certain to prosper. They are for ever telling us of the party of progress, the pioneers of progress, the banners of progress, the leaders of progress, and the rank and file of progress; and sometimes they treat progress as an emotional being—tell us of its joys and sorrows, and spell it with a capital letter.* They take surveys more or less hasty and inaccurate of one thing after another, and at the end of each such survey hasten to inform us that we are living in an age of progress. Their acuteness and enthusiasm may remind us of the conduct of children standing at the doors and windows of a railway carriage, at the time when the train may be expected to start, and eagerly, perhaps prematurely, crying out, 'Look! we're moving!'

By thus having progress constantly forced upon our attention we are brought to a state of mind something like that of Miss Jellybye when she exclaimed: 'I hate Africa. It's a beast. I wish it were dead!' And yet it is often difficult to say what is meant by this progress. Two things, however, are tolerably clear—first that progress does not always mean improvement; and secondly, that these quasi-proprietors

* I suppose many of us noticed the solemn warning given to Tiverton on the occasion of the late election, when it was announced by an 'organ of progress' that 'Tiverton will this day show whether she will form a drop in the fertilising stream of beneficent progress or a mere block in the dam of reaction.'

of progress are not all agreed as to what it does mean. Surely some of those who would have us know that they are constantly occupied in preparing the way for progress, unfurling its banners, and leading or marching in its ranks, have never heard of 'The Rake's Progress,' or 'The Progress of Error.'

As an apology for saying so much about progress I must plead the infection of example. *Semper ego auditor tantum.*

The fact is, I had myself intended to use the word 'Progress' in speaking of elementary schools of the third class, for it seems to me that to these schools every meaning of the word is alike inapplicable. So far as I can make out, they are about as bad as they can be, and are not likely to improve.

If we turn to Crabbe's 'Borough,' we shall see that he begins his account of schools by describing one—

That small regard for rule
Or study pays, and still is deemed a school :
That where a deaf, poor, patient widow sits
And awes some thirty infants as she knits.

He goes on to speak of the smallness of the room and the insubordination of the children, but abstains from saying anything more about the instruction, probably because he had observed that there never was any to speak of. For if these schools were in his day at all like what they are at present, many of them were kept by persons who were very indifferent readers, had very arbitrary ideas of spelling, and none whatever of writing. Yet, if the children who attend schools of this sort were all within the age at which children are recognised by the Education Department as infants, the case would not be so bad. Even then there would be good ground for complaint on the score of the unhealthiness of the small crowded room, and the delay of 'the infants' progress.' But as a matter of fact, these schools are frequently attended by children of all ages up to twelve or thirteen, and there are sometimes to be found there girls of fifteen. If some of the so-called teachers of adventure schools would set up nurseries instead of professing to keep schools, they might be of some service. But work of that kind they refuse. I recollect on one occasion seeing a very young child brought into a school by two elder sisters; but as soon as the trio had got inside the room the mistress cried out, 'Take it away; I can't do with babies. It's a shilling a-day for babies.'

So far as I could learn by enquiry the reasons why children stay so long at these miserably inefficient places are three—first, the said places are supposed by the parents of many of the children to be more genteel than larger schools under regular inspection; secondly, it is

supposed by many parents that a small kitchen, heated by a large fire and crowded to suffocation is in cold weather more comfortable and healthy than a large room properly ventilated; thirdly, as the children are in certain cases allowed to choose their own school they not unnaturally prefer a place where they are amenable to no discipline, and are at liberty to suppose themselves genteel. The second of these reasons I have repeatedly heard from parents who believed in it, from teachers who profited by it, and from other teachers whose schools were thinned by it. I am not sure that the practice of allowing children to choose their own schools is very common; but I was told that in one large town it was usual for the parents to give the children their weekly pence on a Monday morning, and send them off to school without ever enquiring where they went. The bad effects of such a custom are manifest. The teacher fears to reprove the child lest he should withdraw. The child perhaps goes about from school to school and acquires many of the bad habits characteristic of vagrants. Perhaps he sometimes keeps away from school altogether; perhaps, too, he learns to impose upon his parents by paying less than he has received. At any rate, he gets the notion that, by attending the school, he is conferring a favour on the teacher, and from this notion follow all the miserable results which are familiar to the least observant person who has ever taken a class of town children in a Sunday-school.

But the truth of the first reason assigned for the popularity of adventure schools of the worst kind may easily be proved by anyone who is willing to give himself the trouble to look into the matter. Any such person will find it to be a fact (and a fact which is of the greatest importance in the judgment of many parents, as some of them will no doubt admit) that at a large number of these schools the children are addressed by the teacher and by each other as Miss M. or Master N., even though Master N. may be in rags, and Miss M. may still be of an age when the fact that she goes unwashed is hardly a discredit to herself; and in all probability, long after this age has been passed, Miss M. will continue to sit idle in the same place, and Mrs. M., who loves gentility and dislikes soap, will refuse to send her daughter to a much better and (it may be) cheaper school, on the ground that 'there are ever so many roughish children go there.'

This anxiety to be genteel becomes keener and more painful as one gets to those schools where the amount of the fee approaches nearer to the weekly ninepence per head, which is the highest payment in any school that is to be recognised as elementary. I am bound to admit that at one or two of these would-be genteel schools which I visited the instruction was fairly good, though the children had to take it 'muddy mixed with baser things.' At more than one place of the

kind some very respectable words were proscribed as inelegant,* and a perverse ingenuity was displayed in the invention of long roundabout ways of expressing the simplest ideas; so that it is hardly an exaggeration to say, that if only the teacher had possessed a sufficient command of words, the children would have been taught to use a language, compared with which the speeches of Hood's Doctor, at Vespasian House, or the worst imitations of the style of Johnson, would have been patterns of simplicity. Surely in some such place was begun the education of the youth I have read of who hung himself with his Sunday neck-tie, and left pinned to his waistcoat an explanatory paper, on which was written, 'God made me a man, but man made me a tailor.'

I was informed, in the case of one small 'academy,' that though, in accordance with 'immemorial usage,' the fees were low, yet that the pupils were 'carefully selected from the upper and middle classes; applications from other quarters being respectfully but very firmly declined.' Yet the mistress had had the good sense to teach the girls to keep accounts, a branch of knowledge which would, as she observed, be useful to them when they began to keep shops. When I asked about the sewing, I was told that needlework was 'permitted' to be done if the parents specially desired that it should be done, but that as a rule it was 'discouraged.' I may observe, in passing, that plain sewing is very commonly 'discouraged' in adventure schools of all sorts.

In another place, where I found that the elder children could not write down from dictation any number consisting of three digits, or even read any such number when written, and were also extremely backward at reading and spelling, I asked the mistress to put a few questions to her pupils that I might hear what she had taught them. Thereupon she began to question them from a book which they had evidently attempted to learn by heart. I took a copy of the title-page of this book. The work professed to be 'a system of geography, including also the elements of astronomy, an account of the solar system, a variety of problems to be solved by the celestial and terrestrial globes, and a pronouncing vocabulary in the form of a gazetteer.' The part to which the children's attention had been turned was a series of questions on orthography and syntax—subjects not very closely connected with anything on the title-page, so far as I could make out. But 'gazetteer' seems to be a comprehensive term, and to have more meanings than those given in the dictionary.

* I asked a boy at a place of this kind what was meant by the word 'parents,' which he had just read. By way of giving him a broad hint I said, 'You mean your father and ——' He drew himself up and answered, 'I mean my papa and my mamma.'

A manuscript treatise on solid geometry, which had the appearance of having been written thirty or forty years, was once handed to me by a schoolmistress as a proof that the girls attending the school 'could do something.' The mistress was anxious that I should look at this book, though she did not wish to have the children examined, and had effectually provided against all risks by giving them a holiday. After turning over the pages for a minute or two, I found the word *parallelipiped*—remarked that it was a long word, and said I should like to know more about it. The old lady was indiscreet enough to put on her spectacles and look at the word; and when she saw its dimensions, and was unable to conceal the fact that it was quite new to her, she became considerably incensed, and steadily refused to tell me anything about the authorship of the book. I left her muttering to herself that she thought no one had a right to ask about her school who did not mean to bring some money to it, and that it was a queer thing if she was at liberty to prevent the pupils from being examined, and yet was herself to be 'questioned up and down in that way.' However, I had occasion to pay her another visit, at the end of which we parted on very good terms.

It is a curious fact that the day fixed for the examination of these schools happened far more frequently than not to be a day on which 'the best scholars' were absent. From the constant observation of this fact, I was forced to the conclusion that those scholars were invariably the best who had least to do with the school.

Another curious fact I noticed was that in many schools the teacher instead of the children answered the questions asked. I really believe that most of them did it in all simplicity, having an idea that if the answers required could be got out of the school it mattered not what part of the school they came from. I remember only one case in which an answer was suggested to a child in such a way as to lead one to think that there was an intention to prompt the child on the sly, or in which the teacher seemed to be the least ashamed when I complained about the practice I am speaking of. I had a number of small children standing round me, and I was asking them questions about different pictures which I was showing them. As soon as I had asked a certain question, the mistress dropped a handkerchief behind the class, and whilst stooping to pick it up took the opportunity of whispering the answer to one of the children. When the question came round to this child she gave the proper answer. I said, 'That's quite right; did you hear Miss A. tell you?' 'Yes.' 'So did I.' On hearing this remark, Miss A. became suddenly interested in the state of the weather, and took up her post for a long time at the street-door.

But it would be quite a mistake to suppose that adventure schools

are always carried on in small rooms in private houses. It is a common thing for the trustees or proprietors of a chapel to let the chapel or some room under it to be used as a schoolroom on the week-days.* It is to be presumed that such trustees and proprietors are at no pains to find tenants who are fit for the work they undertake. If they do exert themselves to secure such tenants it must be acknowledged that their attempts are, as a rule, singularly unsuccessful. The rooms under these chapels, though often of a fair size, are for the most part dark, melancholy places, and in one important respect often resemble the houses which are now being pulled down in different parts of London as being unfit for dwelling-places. And where the chapel itself is made use of the building is generally unsuitable for a school. Yet it has its advantages. When the master goes into the pulpit 'the eminence of his station gives him a commanding prospect of his duty.' The opening and shutting of the pew-door affords a harmless pastime to the children; and if any child be of a retiring and contemplative turn of mind he may withdraw to a pew at the far end of the building; and when he has shut himself in and climbed on to the seat the associations of the place will probably be too strong for him; so that he will presently fall asleep, and dream that he is hearing a sermon.

I have seen as many as a hundred and sixteen children in one of these schools in which there was no secular reading-book of any kind. All the pupils, from the eldest to the youngest, had to be satisfied with a course of Testament. I suppose the highest excellence looked for in any reader was that he should be able to stumble through a genealogy. It is not difficult to decide whether this choice of a reading-book was due to some respect for the building in which the school was carried on, or to the fact that it is hard to find a book which is so strongly bound, and contains so much for the money, as a fourpenny Testament.

When I asked the master at this place what answer I was to give to the question, 'Whether or not the school would in future be conducted as a public elementary school,' and had endeavoured to explain to him the arrangements to be observed in such a school with respect to religious teaching, he *professed* to be much shocked that I should think it possible he would ever have anything to do with a school which was not brought up 'in the nurture and admonition.' Certain facts which came to my knowledge warrant the laying of a considerable stress on that word 'professed.'

* I remember going, some years since, into an old church which was used in the same way. School was carried on at the east end of the building; caps and bonnets were on the communion table, and the piscina was full of ink-pots.

On the whole, I think that these schools conducted in chapels do more harm than the cottage schools; for the instruction is equally bad and the children in attendance are older and more numerous.

I have spoken strongly about these adventure schools from no feeling of ill-will towards the adventurers. Almost without an exception they treated me with great civility, and were ready to give me all the information I wanted. Some of them certainly expressed their opinions on matters personal to myself with an uncommon degree of freedom. Thus an old lady who was very deaf, and probably had not heard one word I had said to the children, told me she was 'very well satisfied' with my way of talking to them, and, after surveying me very attentively for some moments, added, 'You're only a middling bonny young man, but I'll be bound to say you make a bonny good thing out of it all:' and she came forward, holding out a trumpet through which she expected me to give an account of receipts and expenses. But no feeling of anything but amusement could be roused by pleasantries of this kind; and many of the people I am speaking of were so agreeable and good-natured that all one saw of them only made one regret more and more deeply the necessity which had compelled them to undertake work for which they were utterly unfit. And I must not forget to mention that there were one or two cases in which a teacher who had had to contend against constant ill-health, who was entirely without books or apparatus, except such as he could afford to buy with a part of his earnings, and who, in addition to this, laboured under all the disadvantages arising from the unsuitableness of what he used as his school-room—had nevertheless contrived to teach a number of children to read and write very well, and to understand very fairly the first four rules of arithmetic; whilst perhaps at some school close by, where everything had been liberally provided except a proper teacher, the children knew next to nothing, and were considered by their teacher to afford a remarkable proof of the innate stupidity of the neighbourhood.

But after making every allowance for exceptional cases, I am afraid that if the children of the poor are to be properly educated, these adventure schools, or nearly all of them, must be closed. In those parishes which form part of the district of a School Board this can be done, and in some places it certainly will be done whenever such a school is pronounced inefficient. So far as I know, there is no direct way of preventing an incapable person from keeping an adventure school; but a School Board has a power of compelling parents to send their children to an efficient school, and of thus withdrawing the pupils from schools where the instruction is not satisfactory.

The application of this power will no doubt be a heavy blow to

many of the 'adventurers,'* and one cannot but wish that there were some way of pensioning those who have no other means of making a living. Yet there can be no doubt that the blow ought to be dealt; for surely no one will maintain that in any parish, however unimportant, the education of successive generations of children ought to be sacrificed to the maintenance of an aged widow or spinster, however worthy and however infirm.

But as the Education Act now stands there are no means of dealing with these schools in any district—in fact there are no means of making the children of any district attend any school whatever—until a School Board has been formed in such district, and the machinery of a School Board certainly does not seem to be well adapted for country parishes. The small occupiers of land, on whom in many places the expense would principally fall, and who would often be the only available men to serve as members of a School Board, are seldom either much interested in education or capable of contributing much to its advancement. If a School Board be made up of men whose one cry is 'Keep the rate down,' and whose constant occupation makes it difficult for them to spare time for meetings and debates, such a Board will frequently be a 'School Board in default.'

The following attempted description of an interview I had with a number of farmers may serve in some degree to illustrate these remarks. The men in question were the principal ratepayers in a certain parish which was miserably off for school accommodation. These men had been induced by the clergyman of the parish to fill up a form in which they had stated their intention of building a new school, and had applied to the Education Department for a building grant. They had done this under the impression that the department would defray the whole expense; but when they found that they themselves would be expected to contribute, their views underwent an immediate and a thorough change. They discovered all sorts of advantages in keeping up the existing school. So when I told them that it would be necessary to provide accommodation for eighty children, and that I understood they purposed building a new school, they suddenly became quite boisterous in denying that they had any intention of the kind. It seemed as if each of them had put together a number of sentences, each expressing the speaker's determination to stick to the old place, and each speaker seemed to imagine that each sentence of his speech

* I met with a curious illustration of the fact that these people consider themselves to have a kind of vested interest in their neighbours' children. A man accounted for the small attendance at his school by saying, 'I'm sorry to have to tell you that some gentlemen have been about who didn't think it below them to *kidnap* my scholars away to other schools.'

contained a weighty argument, which must be brought forward with all possible dispatch. The scene which ensued after I had spoken about a new school somewhat resembled a stage imitation of a debate in the French Assembly, except that it was conducted with perfect good-nature. In the course of proceedings one old farmer slapped the clergyman on the back in a way which showed that he had a very firm belief in the existence of christian forbearance. What fragments I heard of the different speeches were something of this sort. 'If the room isn't high enough we can dig the floor down till it is.' 'We're hard set in these parts to lie close enough to keep warm.' 'We don't want sittings for eighty children: there isn't above two-score in the place.' 'Short o' room! Why I've seen well on to a hundred children set in this very spot; and rare and snug they looked, I can tell you.' 'And to go and build a new place when you'll have all the bricks to cart.' 'There's as much air inside a man's hat here as would serve a railway station in London.' 'And to want to rive it down when all of us learnt here, and most of our fathers and grandfathers—it isn't natural.' And the man whose speech lasted longest, and who consequently had a few seconds to himself, ended by saying (I suppose in irreverent allusion to the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council on Education), 'And if they don't believe how keen it is let a few of 'em come down in winter time and try how they like it.' This last sentence called forth great applause, and by such applause many of the other speakers were induced to try over again the best sentence of their own respective speeches. This gave me a chance of making a few notes of what was said.

When I had an opportunity of speaking, I asked how it was that a hundred children had been seated at once in the school, if there were only two-score in the parish. The man who was responsible for the statement about the two-score answered that he did not believe there ever had been a hundred children in the room at once; for that if so many had got together in such a small space after walking to school on a rainy day they would have taken fire like a wet haystack. But he who had seen the hundred children said he was speaking of thirty years back, when there was not another school within three miles; and that, now he came to think of it, he was sure there must have been something over a hundred brought together pretty often.

I then attempted to explain what would be required from the parish in the way of school accommodation, and assured them that it was not likely that the ordinary rules would be broken through in this case. But I doubt whether what I said impressed them much; for, after we had taken a very hearty farewell of each other, I heard one of them say, 'He sees right enough that we are not the same as other

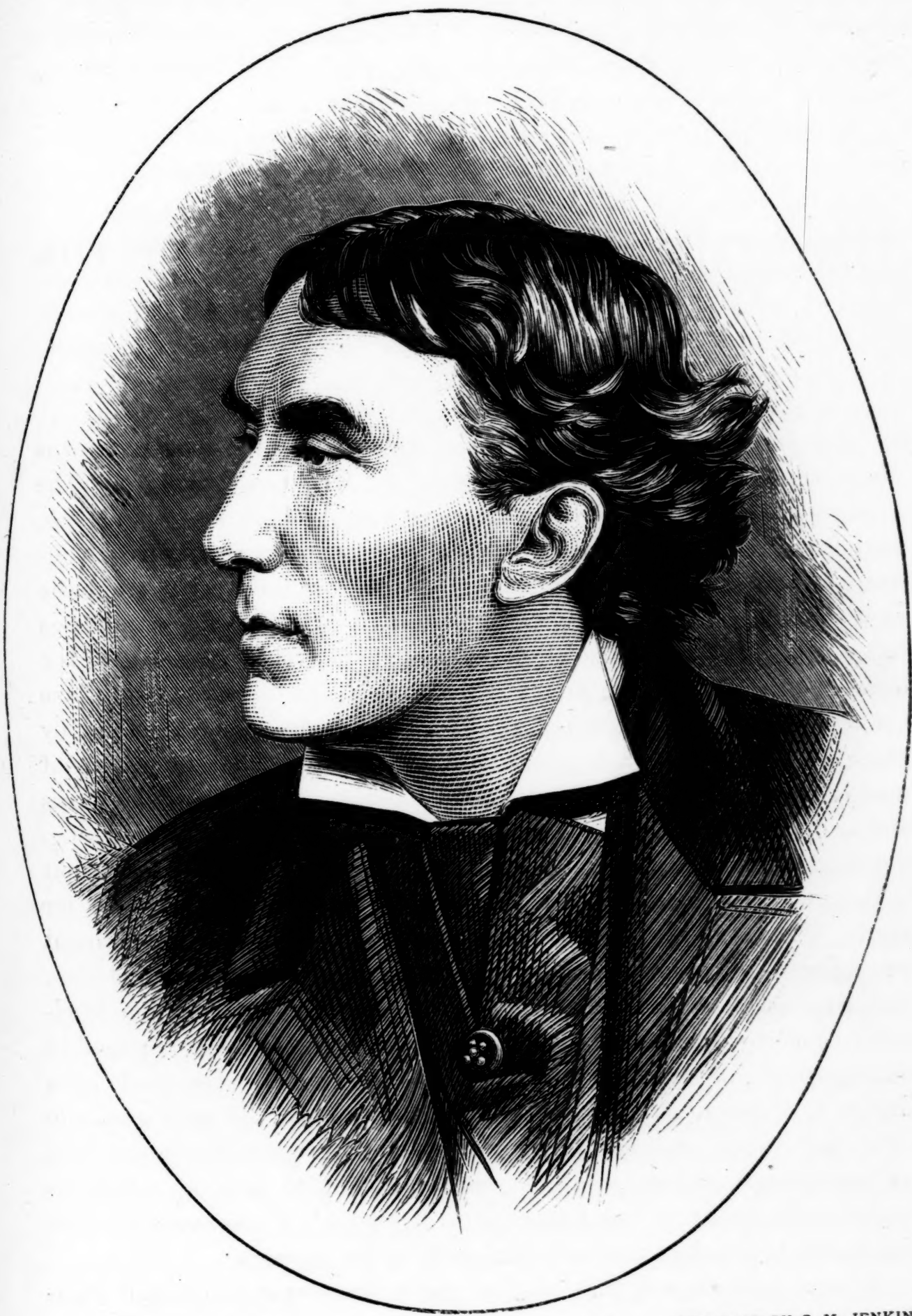
places, and that they needn't put themselves about to meddle with us.' The answer to this remark was, 'If he doesn't see it after all the talk he must be right daft.'

To return to what I was saying about School Boards. The difficulties of forming a School Board in every parish, or even of forming one for every two or three parishes, seem to be almost insurmountable. But if the establishment of School Boards were made compulsory, and if large united districts were formed by the free use of the powers given in the Act, and permanent officers were employed to look up the children, it seems possible that a proper set of men might be found to constitute a Board, and that the children might, without any great expense, be compelled to attend proper schools in each such united districts. In the meantime, it is quite certain that there will be numbers of country parishes in which there is ample accommodation in good schools for all the children, but that in these same parishes many children will waste their time sitting clotted together in a cottage kitchen, whilst many others will make no pretence of attending any school whatever.

HENRY IRVING AND THE RISE OF THE NATIONAL DRAMA.

IN the autumn of last year there appeared in the pages of this Magazine a thoughtful and able essay, by Mr. Tom Taylor, on 'The Theatre in England: its Shortcomings and Possibilities,' which has, during the present dramatic season, in part received an emphatic confirmation, while, on the other hand, it has in part received as emphatic a contradiction. We may briefly summarise Mr. Taylor's ideas as follows:—'That it is absolutely necessary, for the purposes of the drama as an art, that we should possess some such institution as the Comédie Française, supported, in addition to the general public, by the State and by a certain number of subscribers. That long runs of merely spectacular or sensational pieces debase and demoralise actors and audiences alike; while long runs of good pieces, by over-taxing, deteriorate actors. That these long runs seem to profit managers, but that, in the end, what is bad for actors and audiences is bad also for them. That till the present generation the theatre was pre-eminent among amusements, commanded attention and interest from all classes, and was unquestionably a place of more solid and satisfactory intellectual resort and relaxation. That a better style of men engaged in management; and that their search for profit was governed by a higher conception of the roads to it. That, finally, the only means to raise the drama from its present low and degraded position is by a private subsidy, subscription, or guarantee fund, to back up a theatre, under management of the subscribers' choosing, till the better public has learnt to trust its promises and rally to its support.'

It must be confessed that, at first sight, these statements and arguments appear unanswerable, but a more careful examination will show that there is valid reason for believing that we are now witnessing a most unexpected but at the same time powerful rise in our national drama, and that the public, whose taste has never been



DRAWN BY F. WINTER.

ENGRAVED BY C. M. JENKIN.

HENRY IRVING.

The history of the United States of America is a story of growth and development. It begins with the first settlers who came to the continent in search of a new home. They found a land of vast resources and potential, but also one of many challenges. The early years were marked by struggle and hardship, but the spirit of the pioneers was one of determination and optimism. They built a nation from scratch, one that was based on the principles of liberty and justice for all. Over the years, the United States has grown in size and power, but it has never lost sight of its founding ideals. It has faced many challenges, both at home and abroad, but it has always emerged stronger and more united. Today, the United States stands as a beacon of hope and freedom for people around the world. Its history is a testament to the power of the human spirit and the ability of a nation to overcome adversity and build a better future.

thoroughly vitiated, is hastening to support those who are labouring to restore the stage to its true position. At the outset, it appears to us that the mere raising of the question as to whether the drama has deteriorated or not is a sign of health; and we are confirmed in our opinion by the action of a few fearless critics, who, in spite of every obstacle and influence, never miss an opportunity of directing public attention to the real worth of each new play as it appears.

As regards Mr. Taylor's first statement that it is absolutely necessary for the purposes of the drama as an art that we should possess something similar to the Comédie Française, it will be necessary to consider what this institution has done for the French stage, and in how far it is possible in our own country. That the Comédie Française has had fair trial, and that at the present moment it has lost none of its popularity and power is undeniable; but it is just as undeniable that, if it were the true means of elevating public taste and so of raising the stage, it would no longer require State support, while the majority of the Parisian theatres would never have been surrendered to senseless buffoonery or extravagant spectacle. We do not dispute that the Comédie Française was as admirably conceived as it has been ably maintained. We would not attempt to deny that it has produced a large number of most distinguished dramatists, actors and actresses; but we do assert at the same time that it is no fair sample of the entire French stage, and that, like all monopolies, it has but maintained one sound spot amid a very sea of corruption. Let us, however, for the sake of argument, grant that such an institution is the only means of raising the drama and of keeping it in a healthy condition, and let us consider in how far it is possible in our own country. The national jealousy of all State-supported institutions is enormous; it is therefore not unnatural that we should be of opinion that an attempt to subsidise any one of our theatres must result in disastrous failure, or if it succeeded, would raise such a howl of popular indignation that it would be speedily recalled.

The only alternative, then, lies in the action of a certain number of individuals who would be willing to support their convictions by a sum of money. As a necessity, these individuals would be pre-eminently interested in the drama, and each and all hold his peculiar views as to the proper course to be pursued. Consequently, even supposing the highest form of the art to be aimed at and each person to be animated by the most uninterested motives, we should have a great divergence of opinion, and, as a natural sequence, a vast amount of discussion, ending probably in an *ad interim* appointment of a manager. This gentleman, a man of literary taste and stage experience, would certainly hold as decided

opinions as those who elected him, and would naturally, except in the rare case in which he agreed with the subscribers, object to be dictated to, or perhaps even to have any suggestions made to him. So after many attempts, and when probably much temper and more money had been lost, the company for the elevation of the drama would discover that the only real means of reaching the end they desire is to support in the most unhesitating manner such managers who, while loving their art, make a business of it, and strive to give the public a high, healthy-toned means of recreation and amusement.

One must perforce agree with much that Mr. Taylor has said about long runs of pieces deteriorating actors, although it is not easy to see how it would be possible for most of our leading theatres to have a regular *repertoire*, inasmuch as such a course would add to the expenditure to an extent that would make them unremunerative. Furthermore, as London is a city whose convenience and necessities are entirely different from those of any other city in the world, it is difficult to perceive how the existing circumstances, which we freely admit to be harmful, can be practically modelled according to the rules and regulations of the Comédie Française, whose example is not followed, to any great extent, even in its own home.

Seeing, therefore, that the national drama has lost some of its former position and power, that there is a real desire to restore its influence, and that even if it were advisable, it is not practicable, to copy a foreign institution, we are constrained to look for a remedy at home.

It is when employed in this search, and when reviewing what we have at our disposal to assist us, that we become conscious of influences at work that bid fair soon to take away the reproach from us that, while as a nation we are increasing in commercial prosperity, we are fast deteriorating in those noble means of recreation which have done so much to form the national character.

It is undeniable that of late years we have been only too eager to copy the most vicious forms of the continental drama, that we have imported a spirit among us—a spirit that did its best during the rule of the Second Empire to corrupt the *morale* of the French nation; but it is as undeniable that there are those left who have resisted, and still continue to resist, all attempts to make the drama and the stage the exponent of enervating sensationalism or of artistic and refined immorality.

But inasmuch as average talent can do little more than keep its own ground, it becomes evident that any sensible progress can alone be effected by the master spirit which overcomes every difficulty, and makes its way in spite of every opposition. We look around, and find

one man who has raised himself to the pinnacle of histrionic reputation, and who, supported by the ablest manager and most poetic author we have, bids fair to rival the time-honoured reputation of the great actors of whom this country is proud.

It is to this man, to Henry Irving, that we have to look for a revival of the departed glory of the English stage, and it is within his strength to raise up a generation of dramatic authors who, fired by his wondrous power of impersonation, shall not only produce dramas worthy of representation, but at the same time contribute to the national literature. By native worth and pure hard work has he won his way, step by step, to popular favour, and by two consecutive majestic creations placed himself in the foremost rank. There are many other actors whom we admire, whom we are pleased to see, who at times even rouse us to enthusiasm, but, visit every theatre in London we find but one performance that can compare with that of 'Charles I.' at the Lyceum. We admit that Mr. Irving's advantages are many. He has had to render the work of an author, Mr. Wills, who is not only a dramatist, but a painter and poet. He has had a manager, Mr. Bateman, who faithfully embodies all the requirements that Mr. Tom Taylor asserts are necessary for so important an office; and, finally, in his last piece, he has acted with a lady, Miss Isabel Bateman, who plays the part of Queen Henrietta in the sweetest way imaginable; and, although too young to be majestic, displays a depth of pathos that surprises and delights all beholders. Encouraged and assisted by all these undoubted aids to success, Mr. Irving has, with a grand and final effort, placed upon dramatic record a creation whose full power and scope have as yet been by no means adequately grasped. No other living actor could have aroused similar emotions in a mixed audience by a character so thoroughly one-sided and partizan as that of Charles I. It is this wondrous sympathy that Mr. Irving excites that makes him so great. Sceptics may object that the character and history of the unfortunate king are so naturally provocative of sympathetic emotion, that it is easy for an actor assuming such a part to play upon the feelings. But what shall we say of the Innkeeper in the 'Bells?' Is the man who murdered his guest, and whose sole redeeming point was a somewhat ordinary parental affection, is such a character naturally provocative of sympathetic emotion? And yet who does not remember the almost-breathless silence, interrupted only by sobs, that accompanied the actor's impersonations? The poor wandering playgoer, jaded by the mediocrity to which he is accustomed, strolls, we will say by chance, into the Lyceum Theatre to see a play he vaguely remembers to have heard 'was good.' Bearing in mind the usual treatment of similar subjects by the

generality of dramatic authors, he expects to listen to a tedious opening, to witness a ballet, a battle between the Royalists and Round-heads, the trial of Charles, realising the celebrated historical picture, and, finally, the execution of a dummy by means of a real axe. He is agreeably disappointed, for he finds the author bent upon representing unwritten rather than written history, the manager determined to maintain his art, and the actor eager to present a life-like copy of the great original. So, after a time, he becomes more and more interested, and, finally carried along by the irresistible beauty of the subject, and by the sublime grandeur of soul that is infused into it by its exponent, he is fain to confess that here, at last, has he found the true home of the national drama, and a man at the head of affairs not only able but willing to practise what he preaches.

We must by no means be considered as asserting that either Mr. Wills' present work, or Mr. Irving's present acting, is perfection; but we do mean to assert that both may become so as nearly as possible. It must undoubtedly be by earnest application and indomitable industry alone that the grand promise that both these men have shown will be justified; but, all said and done, one might have gone on preaching and writing to an endless extent about the condition of the stage its shortcomings and possibilities, had we not discovered an author like Mr. Wills, and even he might have achieved but a literary success had it not been that he found one with sufficient innate vigour and genius to represent the glorious creations of his brain.

There are several contemporaries of Mr. Irving, each of whom seen at his best would suggest ideas sufficient for the most lengthened criticism. The acting would inspire words, for it had moved the spectator. But with Mr. Irving the very reverse is the case. His acting does not inspire words, for the critic feels that it is beyond mere words, and that he must write of what he has seen in no ordinary mood or way; he feels that sensations to which he thought himself almost a stranger have been excited within him. He is eager, nay, anxious, to do justice; but, alas! finds the task almost beyond him, for his emotion is of that kind that transcends expression.

We have not criticised Mr. Irving's merits from an artistic point of view, or by any self-made principles of dramatic work. We have simply desired to give some expression to the feeling which he alone of actors has aroused within us. We are sensible of the extreme difficulty of such an object, and are certain only of one thing, that we cannot overrate or too highly esteem the grand benefit that must result to the English stage from the conscientious labours of a man whose wondrous gift it is to rival nature by his art.

THE MARRIAGE OF FATHER CHRISTMAS AND SWEET CHRISTIANITY.

BY AMELIA LEWIS.

HE arose ! as the earth's eastern hemisphere turned its face gradually to the great, light-giving luminary, the sun ; as the dense, vapoury masses of the lower atmosphere were cut by the shooting rays of sun-electricity ; as they rested upon Palestine and threw over it a rose-grey hue of nascent effulgence, so heaved the earth under the higher power, so trembled its crust under the warming sun-light, so burst asunder the bonds of darkness, and, opening the womb of the soil where the shepherds of Bethlehem had heard the first angelic hymn sung to the Jesus-child, there burst from the cleft—he, the harbinger of peace on earth for one yearly day—' Father Christmas.' The clash awoke the lighter creatures of the air ; they fluttered up, and, influenced by the gladness around, began instantly their natural hymns, the spontaneous chorus of earthly creation. From the cleft came majestically the tall, hale figure of a man. He stood up erect, shook his hoary curls, and smoothed his flowing robe. As his great blue eye rested upon the earth, far into the spaces of its rounded surface, he sent the consciousness that ' Christmas-day ' had come into every Christian heart. He had arisen, and with him hope for Christians was renewed for another yearly course, with him joy and good-will were born.

There he stood, casting his look backward and forward ; seeing into the distance both ways, and addressing his words to the lands before him. His grand towering form trod lightly on the sacred spot, his long silvery curls hung gracefully over him, and his flowing garment fell from the shoulders and arms to his feet, held by a girdle midway. Gently he raised his look up into the vaulted sky above, and thus let it dreamily fall on the countries beyond him.

' Once more have I arisen ; once more do I stand where he cradled me eighteen hundred years ago, and once more shall I make my yearly round, to see if my bride is ready.' He spread out his arms,

and while a sacred light of Divine love shone on his noble features, he exclaimed, 'Oh, sweet Christianity! thou, whom I seek yearly, when wilt thou be ready, my bride? When shall I find thee on earth and, united with thee, rest contented for ever? Wilt never don thy robe of meekness and put on thy garb of sympathy, place over thee the mantle of charity, and, walking forth ready for thy bridals, come and meet me, glad as this morn, stepping joyously among the nations, casting content around thee, and giving me thy open, generous hand with the readiness of one who knows "her lamp is trimmed, and she is ready for the bridegroom?" Here do I arise year by year, and ever hast thou been a laggard; ever hadst thou something to complete in thy dress, never has it been finished. Ugly fashions wouldst thou adopt, tattered garments put round thee, trying to hide their insufficiency and wishing to deceive me by hastily wrapping over them tawdry makeshifts. But I could see these were not bridal robes, that had been begun and finished day by day and month by month, till their completed form hung in graceful folds over thy sweet person! And, shall I find thee to-day, shall I meet with thee among the nations of the earth, shall I take thee home with me but for once, placing on thy brow the bridal-kiss of our humane, loving, just, and ever-harmonising Christian union? Oh! sweet, lovely Christianity, to whom the never-dying beauty of harmony has been granted, whose every movement should be grace, and light, and joy, why tarriest thou? What evil influence of dark powers will ever hold thee back from my embrace? why dost thou listen to their ugly, deceptive whispers, and give way to their false promises? Come, raise thy head but once; rise in thy virgin beauty, as thou wert created eighteen hundred years ago, and, casting the light of thy inborn goodness around thee, give me thy hand, and say, "Here I am." Can'st imagine this yearly seeking, longing, searching for thee, ever to see thee recede from me, to come home again lonely and disheartened—no bride on my arm, no kiss on my brow—but to sink back into my bed of rest—one more year's hope deferred?'

He drew himself up.

'The morning is so bright: shall I begin? shall I set out to find her? I almost dread to be again deceived; might she be ready now, might I see her step forth to meet me—oh! bride of my bosom, disappoint me not, but show me thy completed image but once, somewhere!'

And Father Christmas took up his staff; his own robe was spotless, white as the driven snow, and smooth as the velvety lawn—not a fault to be seen. Completed and finished were his garments, as the great sacrifice for humanity's sake had woven them for ever and ever; for immeasurable time to come—as long as humanity would endure!

Ever juvenescent, he stepped forth, casting his eye backward and forward and measuring the lands of both hemispheres.

Christianity knew he was coming, and had been busy for days; she had furbished up all her pupils, dressed them in their best, hid the rags that *would* peep out here and there, and put over them all kinds of smart vestments, clerical and fashionable: flushed and excited she rested for a few moments, eagerly expecting *his* scrutinising gaze and trying to make up for lazy hours and neglected opportunities by superficial haste and busy fuss.

Christmas put out his foot and lifted his staff; one movement, and he stood on the hills of Rome; by his side was Christianity smiling and curtsying gracefully and proudly, though a little anxiously glancing down at her own holiday toilette.

'Good morning, dear Christmas,' she said; 'again we see you, and how happy your coming makes us; how we set all our bells ringing and our people rejoicing at your advent. Surely it must please you to notice so much joy.'

Christmas seemed affected, by this cordiality; he cast a side-glance at the sweet, noble figure by his side: 'Well, really Christianity, to-day you do look nice; I cannot see a drop of blood on your dress, therefore I presume you have no great war anywhere; you don't look so over-dressed, but rather more modest; it seems you have mended a good many rents in your robe; you have changed your head-dress too; I don't quite like all these ornaments, and there ought to be no sham in any adornment—still there *is* an improvement. As for yourself, I fancy you have grown; you seem taller and you look happier; just a little anxious and troubled in your eyes. Any party-quarrels anywhere? Speak out frankly.

Christianity hem'd and haw'd. 'Really, Christmas, you are very hard at once; why not enjoy the beautiful morning and visit my pupils? I *think* I have done my best.'

Christmas could not help giving way to so much gentle reproach, so he said:

'Come, then, let us see your work, examine your vestments; and if all is ready and your lamp is prepared and burning—ah, then, Christianity!'—

He said no more, but he alluded to the bridal; Christianity cast her eyes modestly on the ground, and raising them again to his face, he could see the tears welling up in them, as if she meant to say, 'Oh, take me as I am;' but he turned away a little, knowing that he could not wed a faulty bride, and that she with whom he should accomplish the great union must be without blemish—pure, single-minded, and holy.

A figure was moving up the hill; Christianity went forward and met her and presented Italia to Christmas.

‘Well, my child, here I am again,’ said the hale old man. ‘And how are you? You know we are old friends; Christianity has been working here a long time—ah, nearly two thousand years; surely you are in trim?’

Italia, a very dignified lady, dressed in rich vestments, with a mitre on her head and a crozier in her hand, seemed flattered.

‘And how is this; you have put on a fashionable mantilla; coming down from your old customs?’

Italia said one could not always be adhering to old rules and must move on a little; she had been working hard to see where improvements were possible. Her chief Christian executive had been made to understand that God’s kingdom, not the world’s, was his; her monasteries and nunneries had been opened wide to the world; her children were sent to school, and her almsgiving was never less, her worship never more earnest. ‘Listen Christianity, listen Christmas, to the beautiful hymns now being sung in your praise.’

They listened: from the great dome of St. Peter’s rose up the strains of harmonious sounds—children’s voices among them; and below they could see crowds gather in the streets to hurry to the churches. Italia seemed sure of success.

‘Still that Latin murmuring, Italia,’ said Christmas, a little sternly. ‘Why not let them worship in their own tongue?’

‘So they do; they speak with their hearts, even if they repeat the formula merely.’

‘But formula is formula, and we want none; we want the soul’s worship, not the body’s.’

Again the sounds came up. ‘Oh! Christmas, how can you find fault, it is so beautiful!’

‘So it is; but is it true?’

‘True? What do you mean?’

‘Does it come from the heart and go to the heart? Look there: those proud figures—they are cardinals, bishops, abbots, and what not; whatever do you want them all for, Italia? And then, next to their grand dresses, see, there are the poor squalid beggars again, hanging on and asking for very bread; there I see the long strings of monks, still bearing all kinds of symbols. Bring them out, Italia; let them go forth and teach those beggars to be industrious and honest. By my word, I hear some swearing and curses in the crowd before the church. Italia, I see robberies committed and rude words exchanged. Italia! Italia! it is very beautiful, but it is not true. See, there in the church, those kneeling people are chattering, others

staring, others sleeping. Italia, I have seen enough—you are improving; for, casting my eye to your north and south, I can see more harmony, in a simpler way. I can see more wholesome teaching, more soul-awakening. I can see much wrangling among the clergy is gone, but the old pride is still there; impure motives exist still; superficial forms of worship hold good, and long-suffering humanity is pushed into a corner, and got off with alms, instead of being enlightened and assisted to rise higher. Italia, you have put off that tattered old mantle and put on your new mantilla, it is true, but you must work harder still to let your dress, your faith, and worship be uniform. My dear Christianity, let me give Italia the kiss of peace, for she has done better than formerly, and I wish to encourage her; but *here* you are not yet ready.'

Italia had not always had this praise, so she was content, and promised to improve still more, while Christmas and Christianity faded from her sight and were gone.

Both stepped on Spanish soil; Christianity became a little more anxious. If Italia were not in trim, what would she say of Hispania—she felt that Christmas would not pass *her*. They found her standing close to Madrid; she was not so graceful as Italia, but still a noble, dignified figure, somewhat careworn and sombre, dressed in heavy ancient robes, with a modern head-dress and faded ornaments. A ray of joy passed over her features as she beheld the two, and she thought to herself 'What a divine couple they will make whenever they are united! surely one ought to do one's best to help them, and bring it about.'

Christmas saluted her, but one could see a shade was on his countenance.

'Good Hispania,' he said; 'Christianity has brought me here to see her work. How can you receive me?'

'Oh! Christmas; always with joy. Whatever may be doing, *your* day is set apart and kept with glad and holy worship. Look around; see the people throng to the churches—see the alms given everywhere, and see for once even factious parties rest content. I think you will be satisfied.'

Christianity was not so sure, so she was silent. Christmas measuredly cast his eye over the land, listened attentively, and heaved a great sigh.

'My dear Hispania, you have suffered much, and I have always a certain respect for you; come, now, use your own judgment. Are those churches all filled with real worshippers? Are those solemn chants bringing joy and happiness? Are those tawdry children cared for? Are those excited faces of the men inclined to settle their differences in a rational and Christian way? Are those tattered,

ignorant multitudes instructed? Do your clergy not rather worship themselves than their God by caring for His needy children on earth? True here and there burns a light; I can see its rising shimmer; I can see schools open and free teaching; but, good Hispania, more hard work still is wanting. Search everywhere; raise thy voice loud and strong; allow no repression of thought; and believe me, Christianity will here only be successful, when no worldly influence will hinder her useful working. Give me the kiss of peace, my child, for you are advancing in the right road—but you are not ready yet.'

Hispania received the kiss gratefully. It was something to hear such kind words from Christmas, who had often despaired of her. Christianity nodded kindly to her, pressed her hand, and was gone with Christmas.

Hark! In the Madeleine at Paris they were singing the praise of Christmas's arrival, while he stood with Christianity at the door.

'See these happy faces, dear Christmas,' said Christianity, 'and let me call her, my amiable "La France."'

She came, the pretty damsel, dressed very elegantly; but, woe! her hair was not very well combed; a little wildly it hung around her.

'I have worked hard to wipe away the war traces you were so angry with last year, for the year before you would scarcely look at me at all and passed by indignantly. See my people are worshipping again; my women are better clothed; my poor better fed; my children better instructed; my clergy is more truthful; and everywhere there is a desire in the people to do better. We cannot throw off all our faults at once, but surely we are mending.' Now La France had a trick of owning her short-comings in so charming a way, that it went against anybody's heart to scold her much; she always thought she could get over people that way. But even if Christianity were deceived and took it all for granted Christmas was not, his eye was that of divine truth and he saw through all devices.

'Pretty La France,' he said, 'you are a spoiled child; you always think you are doing well. What about those poor Communists?'

'Oh, they are not Christians!'

'Not? La France, La France, whatever they are, you made them such, and you ought to bear with them. To let one portion of the community bear a country's mistakes is not right. You ought to have had patience and forgiven faults, which *I* must forgive *you*. You do look brighter and healthier; but, pretty La France, you are not ready yet. See, as my eye roams over your lands I see ugly prisons and lost women, trodden-down men and unjust laws. Tell me, my smart dame, why is your hair so unruffled? That will not please a bridegroom. So I must leave you, and you must work more

earnestly still. Yet, you shall have the kiss of peace, for you are striving, and that is much—very much, for you.'

La France had tears in her eyes, while Christmas kissed her, and she was in a temper. Christianity winked at her to be quiet, but she would not.

'I suppose it will be all fine next door with those horrid Teutons; but I say they are no better than their neighbours.'

Christmas smiled. 'All right pretty one; ambition is good; try and out-do them, and yours shall be the crown.'

'And so I will; come next year and I shall have done a thousand times better.'

La France was always promising; one couldn't be angry with her, so Christmas and Christianity disappeared from her.

They overlooked the lands of Germania. With measured steps the lady appeared; remarkably scrupulous in her appearance; all was in good order. Her hair was well kempt; her brow serene; her dress spotless; her bearing upright. She seemed perfection, but that in her eye there glittered something like greed, and on her neck was a small lump, something like a *reproach*. However, she did not seem to know it, and unconsciously came forward, as if she must win.

'Good day, worthy Christmas—good day, sweet Christianity,' she said; 'I have expected you, and am prepared.'

'No humility there,' thought Father Christmas.

'Look at *my* lands; look at *my* people; look at the joy and happiness; the Christmas trees, the presents, the singing and gladness, the great brotherly love evinced everywhere; look at the unity. Tell me, have you seen such a sight before in your passage?'

'Well, it does look well,' said Christmas. 'Germania, you are an industrious dame.'

'I should think so,' she answered proudly.

'Let me look round. Two years since I found your homes dispeopled and your lands lonely; then I was very angry. It seems better now. But, tell me, what are they wrangling for all over the land? Why, they seem to know more about Christ and Christianity than we ourselves.'

'I cannot help it,' said Germania, sadly; 'they will do it. They are always trying to put Christianity right, and they never get it so. You see we are an inquiring people, and like to get to the bottom of everything.'

'Hem, Germania. Discord among your clergy?—that looks bad. And see, envy there in the south at the north, and too much overbearing in the north. People holding themselves for better than others, always preparing for war, and forecasting armaments. Germania,

Germania, you must get a little humbler and a little gentler before I can say you are ready. But, dear sister, here is your kiss of peace, for you are a worthy dame after all.'

Germania was choking with disappointment; she could not bear to be blamed, and she became sulky.

'Come, come,' said Christianity, 'dearest; be friendly; you are anyhow in the right road.'

That put her up, and cheerfully she returned the kiss: 'Thank you both for the visit; and I will try harder still.'

They were gone, and stood on Britannia's shores. Now, Britannia had expected them anxiously; 'she *would* be ready,' she said. All the charity children were marshalled out; all her paupers had plum-pudding; all her prisoners an extra slice of meat; the sailors had grog, and the soldiers beer; and 'good cheer' was the word of the day. Proud Britannia stood at the head of all the charitable forces, viewing herself from top to toe. *She* could find no blemish; her dress was well made and fitting, her hair smoothed, her figure upright, her feet well shod, and she had even gloves on. Britannia was thoroughly respectable; what more could be needed than that she should give when she had more than she wanted? Look at the institutions of charity, why they covered the land.

'Good day, my visitors,' she said, eagerly; 'it is a happy day to see you, and we rejoice in one voice. In thousands of churches, chapels, and houses of prayer, we welcome the day. Surely, there is no such pious nation in the world!'

They could just hear the school-children's hymns, and they *did* sound very pretty.

Britannia saw it made an impression upon Christmas, and she became quite nervous, in case she might gain the prize. But *his* eye could not be deceived: it roamed here and there, and came back to her with a saddened look.

'Britannia,' said Christmas, 'do you see those drunken men and women—who are they? Do you see those men beating the women—why are they doing that? Do you see those men hurling themselves upon their fellows to rob? Do you see those wretched starved children in the streets, the underpaid women in the lanes, working and having scarcely enough to eat? Oh, Britannia, don't be so charitable, be a little just before there is need for charity. Now, come my dame, am I right?'

Britannia had one good quality among others, she could take a rebuke; so she hid her face and sobbed.

'Forgive me, Christmas,' she said, 'I have to overcome old sins, and we *are* trying. A set of my people, called political and social reformers,

are anxious we should be just to all, and their voice is getting stronger and stronger; perhaps it will get down the old wrong year by year as you come again.'

'And then, Britannia, don't let the clergy of all those sects think *they* know best. Here is our Christianity, let them learn the lesson that we are brothers.'

'And sisters,' chimed in Christianity, softly.

'Right, my dear; we are beginning to learn that lesson, said Britannia, when man will no more think woman beneath him, I am proud to say; we are quite hard at it.'

The kiss which Britannia received was a very hearty one, and they parted from her in quite a cheerful mood: so Christmas told her *she, too, was not ready yet.*

Then they passed to Scandinavia, and found it not ready; some shivered in the cold, whilst others slept in eider-down beds; and going swiftly to America, they heard wonderful protestations and grand preaching, but found that the 'almighty dollar' governed here, so they couldn't be ready; and, lastly, sweeping back to Russia, which always lags behind, even to time, they trembled to see the poor Siberian prisoners and the besotted pauper, the extravagant nobles and wretched peasants, and they knew 'they were not ready!'

With pleasure Christmas cast his glance over the mission-labours, and smiled sweetly on Christianity.

'My dearest, promised bride; you did try to cheat me a little, but still all is improved, all looks fairer. There is at least a wish to belong to you and understand you among your pupils; perhaps it will become better and better, till they will learn that they must belong to you by something higher than mere words and professions, must love each other like brother and sister in truth and honesty.'

'And you, my dearest, seem inclined to weep that I am going; weep not, there is promise, but it cannot yet be fulfilled. Labour on still, labour on ever, and the day, I see, of our wedding will come, when there will be goodwill among men and an eternal Christmas Day. For the present "Adieu!"' He kissed her tear-stained cheeks and pressed her hand, and was gone. The earth opened, and though he had again to go to his bed lonely and unwedded, he looked more cheerful than he had done for many years,

The bridegroom is still waiting, for Christianity, his bride, is not ready yet!

PASSION PLAYS AND PANTOMIMES.

BY ROBERT BATSON.



THE Passion of Christ, which is to the believer the greatest event in all history, is to the intelligent infidel, at least, the most interesting. He who, in the words of Professor Seeley, 'bore the load of the world's distress,' is from all points of view the first figure on the stage of time. The passionate devotee of the Redeemer blends in sympathy with him who spells a certain sanctity in the most prominent recipient of the homage of poor humanity, which the world has ever seen. So much human love as Christ has received is in itself Divinity. To be passionately loved is to be supremely exalted. 'When I touch a human hand,' said the great French writer, 'I touch Heaven.' Christ has touched all hands. He is the meeting-point of myriad swimming eyes, the asylum of innumerable confidences, the better-self of the flesh, the lullaby of the weeping children of a larger growth, the mystic star that promises something that is not weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable—tired human nature's sweet restorer, the sacrament of the lips of the brotherhood, the rock of shipwrecked ages, the balm of the heartache of the world. Thus, the very phrase Passion Play, to use the beautiful expression of Coleridge, 'finds us.' It awakes a tender response, or an intellectual excitement, or a social sensation; some feeling it must create.

The Ammergau Passion Play added other elements of sensibility to the unique theme. Those who were actors in the performance which celebrated the Passion of the Prince of Peace had also been actors on a stage concentrating all the passions of war.

When in the rough wooden shed at Ammergau, that hamlet embosomed in the highlands of Bavaria, Jesus—whose part was played by Joseph Mair, wood carver—moaned out that he was athirst, the pathos of the scene was intensified, whilst the awe it inspires was not decreased by the fact that the battalion to which Joseph Mair belonged was cut to pieces, and that many a poor fellow dying on the field must have uttered the same cry.

But after we have paused one instant sadly to dwell on the human suffering of which Christ was the most conspicuous example, by an involuntary transition, which it is not difficult to explain, we gladly

pass back to the tremendous events associated by regenerate Christendom with Divinity alone. The chain of episodes represented in the Passion Play is in itself a drama—the drama. Christ murmurs with gentle solemnity, ‘It is finished!’ raising humanity to its grandest, while Nature, at her grandest also, breaks out in thunder. The priests exchange looks of fear and words of hurry. The veil of the Temple is rent in twain. A pale messenger rushes in with the ominous news, and the priests leave the stage trembling. So runs the play. ‘It is finished!’—the most majestic climax recorded in history. ‘It is finished!’—the bridged gap between sweet everlasting being and bitter death. ‘It is finished!’—a formula wrapping up the wrath of God, the punishment of man, the agony of Christ, the redemption of the race, doctrines which no intelligent man has ever contemplated as possibly true, without recognising as certainly awful. And should all this, which is so inexpressibly sacred, be acted? Our first reply would be, ‘Yes.’ Acting is, after all, only a vivid realisation of a mental image. Can there be a better, fairer, eidolon to be so pictured than the form of Christ, as enshrined in Holy Writ?

Why not make the stage a sacrament to perpetuate, vivify the ever-green memory of the fair life that lived not yet two millenniums ago in Palestine? Why not hold up the mirror to Divine nature? Alas, for poor humanity! History upsets this intuition. Facts are against our feelings. Christ ought never to be personified without kindling afresh the devotion due to His office and His person. But, as a matter of fact, few pages in human history are more melancholy than those which chronicle the personification. With a sweet simplicity of admiration, which it is painful to know to be misgrounded, that usually well-informed journal, the *Daily News*, quotes the circumstance that, ‘as our correspondent relates,’ hundreds of years ago the people of that little village of Ammergau ‘vowed to act a Passion Play every ten years as a good work, and one to the honour of God. The plague was in the village, and they stayed its course by the pious vow then made.’ Now the plague of 1348 was bad enough, but the Flagellants were worse. The plague and the Flagellants and the Passion Plays went hand in hand with practices against which Christianity was the most emphatic of all protests. Strange, but not less true, that the atmosphere of the Passion Play has too often been an outlet for those human proclivities, the existence of which alone rendered the Passion of the Redeemer necessary. I do not say that there was not a current of simplicity, sincerity, and devotion in the methods, histrionic and otherwise, espoused by the fanatic Germans with a view to thwart the plague; but the simplicity was soon lost in the mazes of vice, the devotion degenerated into self-indulgence, and the sincerity developed

too often into a tissue of gorgeous lies. Indeed, I have often thought that when the Flagellants chanted the hymn,

‘ Christ was comforted with gall,
So let us all in crosses fall ;’

when they scourged themselves, when they veiled their bleeding shoulders with black clothes, when they—partly of cunning purpose, partly by the force of reaction from austerity, partly with a view to creating materials for organised repentance—perpetrated those offences, which are least creditable even to secular humanity, they pronounced the most eloquent of all verdicts against the most infamous of all hypocrisies, the hypocrisy of painted, rouged religion. At the same time the rough voice of mankind often stigmatises as hypocrisy that which is only action and reaction. Flesh first, soul next, flesh again, sensuousness, sense of degradation, penitence, sensuousness again—what is this cycle but different parts of our complex nature insisting on revolving in their turn? Sensibility, fine nerves, produce the carnal man; the same sensibility may give a refinement that nauseates selfishness, brute body, and worships the luxury of stately idealism, purity, self-approval. There are two natures in one man. Each nature despises the other. When the man revels in the crimson enjoyments of sense how grey seems religion; when satiated and bitterly self-accused he throws himself into the lofty and serene transports of unswerving devotion to the sweet Master Spirit, whose breath is the Universe, surrounds himself with dim religious light and the æsthetics, the resolves of the sanctuary—why, how mild then seems all that the imagination can dream of vice! The man is two men. Strong passions, just under control, give an imperious will. Strong passions, succumbed to and repudiated, give what St. Augustine calls stairs to heaven. From this point of view passions cannot be too strong. Controlling them, you are a man of action. Abhorring them, you are a man of experience in the wholesome agony of the soul.

Consider that we men have our majority of opinion—we, the great human society have the main chance of social interest to consider; and after we have said all that can be suggested in favour of the Ammergau Passion Play, we must admit that it can well afford to dispense with the *prestige* of its German origin. If anything is calculated to do harm to humanity it is want of reverence, and deceit. Body, mind, soul educated, enjoyed together without poaching on the preserves of one part of our nature, animality without lust, culture without pedantry, religion without fanaticism—this is true life. Lust, pedantry, and fanaticism, are all excesses. There is more danger just now of under-educating, under-enjoying the soul than over-educating, over-enjoying. And Passion Plays are on the side of anything rather than the proper

nurture of the soul. I am using popular terms for convenience sake. What we really are besides 'magnetic mockeries,' it is not my province just now to discuss. Suppose we are mere walking bits of flesh, no one can deny the immaterial results of matter. The God-like emotion is all there—

And he, shall he

Man her last work, who seemed so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fruitless fanes of prayer,
Who trusted God was Love indeed,
And love Creation's final law
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shrieked against his creed
Who loved, who suffered countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or sealed within the iron hills?

This Tennysonian question a Passion Play ought to answer with a stentorian negative. But does it? Have human yearning, human worship found any grounds of hope in the historic vile irreverence of Passion Plays? If we pass from Germany to France, we are confronted by the same sickening phenomena. Details apart, after the fight of the barricades, the Confraternity of the Penitents arranged a procession from Paris to Chartres, the residence of Henry—in its idea sufficiently objectionable. Captain Frère Angi (Henride Joyeuse) appeared arranged in an alb, crowned with thorns, and having his face covered with drops of blood. We feel, as we read of such dramatic exhibitions, that good may be their avowed object, but that evil must be their real end. It edified the bystanders of the Paris of 1600 to see the representative of the Redeemer dragging a cross of painted paste-board, falling under it with groans which were not only heart-rending, but periodical. The two young Capucins who accompanied him on either side represented the Blessed Virgin and St. Magdalene. Four satellites, holding the cords round his neck, repeatedly struck at him with whips. Common sense whispers that they were inviting the long train of penitents that followed rather to burlesque than to realise religion, and so it happens that no insignificant portion of French history resolves itself into a chapter of combats about the 'to be or not be' of religious theatricals.

The Basochiens, established in 1302 by Philip the Friar, represented 'moralities and farces' on a large marble table on certain solemn days. Charles VII. reformed them. In 1442, the law tabooed their performance. Its infraction led to the being put in irons, or diet of stale bread, and as many cans of badly-filtered water as the fanatics.

might take into their heads—mouths I mean—to drink, yet the Basochiens went on casting and recasting their parts. The fruit of this illegal perseverance was that in 1476 the punishment for ‘farces, fooleries, moralities,’ was banishment from the realm. Then Louis XII. had a serious embroglio with Julius II., and encouraged the players to ridicule His Holiness. Under the Valois, the Basochiens were treated kindly by the Court and the Provost, closely watched by the Parliament. In 1541 King and Provost allowed the Confraternity to represent the ‘Mystery of the Old Testament,’ but the Procureur-General made a long harangue to the Parliament protesting against the inexpediency of complying with the royal decree. Nevertheless, scepticism fell from histrionic lips, alms and charities were lessened, adultery disputed the favour of fashion with scandal. ‘Irreligious pleasantries’ were resorted to by labourers and citizens in exchange for the ordinary duties of life.

They crowded these spectacles from eight in the morning to five in the afternoon. Preachers, too, would omit their sermon, clergymen their vespers at midnight, in order not to lose the representation. The united exertions of Parliament and the Attorney-General could not suppress the mystery. At last, in 1548, they succeeded. The confraternity was throttled. But only for a time. Indeed, reasserting itself, with mitigated virulence, the same disease may be traced, as late as the first decade of the eighteenth century. Parisians listened to Louis XIV. in Ahasuerus, Madame de Maintenon in Esther, Louvois in Haman. And throughout the annals of irreligious religion in France, of vice labelled virtue, one most melancholy fact is clear: it was cradled in the Church, nursed by the Throne—it was the broad sense of secular Parliament, freed from the bias of sacerdotal, the opportunity of regal aberration, which so far kept France right. Not that, on the other hand, anything is gained by looking at religious theatres from the Puritan’s point of view. A large slice of ‘the Christianity’ in the world is a matter not of Christ, but of clime. You find all of a sudden a number of flesh-detesting victims to a barbarous climate, good people whom no sun intoxicates with sensuous whirl, and behold the Puritan, ready to shoot a text about Providence at your head, and his dry powder. He does not say that there shall be no more cakes and ale—witness Richards’ powerful, truthful play of ‘Cromwell’—but there are to be no more theatres. Christ, according to Rénan and according to the Gospel was, up to the brief period of his Passion, sunny, joyous, with the happiness of the optimist glowing in his blood. When Mr. Swinburne cries bitterly, ‘Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilæan!’ he combats a shadow. The Galilæan was *not* pale. It is we who are pale—we, the crowded citizens of these

isles. Most 'Christians' are no more, even in their honest aspirations, like Christ than Epicureans like Epicurus. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and the world put on mourning.

He does not condemn the woman taken in adultery, though he tells her to sin no more. And men are born like the celebrated saint, so jealous of their immaculate probity that they dare not look their own mothers in the face. The fact is that the creature creates the creator—not, indeed, the real Creator, but the idol of his creeds. If a man wishes to snarl at freedom of action, his god will be like himself—stringent, severe.

The whole world becomes a gigantic trap to catch the sufferers from God-implanted passion. I say it with the greatest reserve—the God of many Christians is practically an enormous clergyman, with a spotless white tie. He is benevolence-tinged, respectable severity infinitely magnified, but still anthromorphously goody, with a frown of human exclusiveness, divinely aggravated. Looking at the essence of things, I should say that there is more Christianity in Paganism than in Puritanism. Puritanism is that very Pharisaism against which Christ waged incessant war. When Milton cries—

‘ Arise, avenge thy slaughtered *saints* !’

you have the spirit of the Pharisee, the people who separate themselves, the religious exclusives, the holiness which is not in its God, but in itself. Pantomimes were a more genuine outgrowth of Christianity than Passion Plays, though both have shared the infirmity of our nature. But Greece and Judæa have both been marvellously misinterpreted.

Now, the Pantomime is to the Passion Play what the mirth of Christmas is to its cause. Had there been no Passion, there could have been no Christmas; and had there been no Christmas, there could have been no Pantomime. The Founder of Christianity continued the reign of kindness to little children. At Christmas, boy-bishops, as we shall see, invariably took as the text of their sermons, ‘ Suffer the little children to come unto me.’ This is the serious keynote of the melodies of Christmas. The Pantomime is the jubilee of babes and sucklings. Our little ones have always been made a great deal of at Christmas since the Divine infant consecrated the manger of His birth. And just as the Passion Play has degenerated, so has Pantomime—the one into irreverent hypocrisy, the other into irreverent buffoonery; both to attain in our time a resurrection of decency and moderation.

The history of Pantomime in this country—using the word in the broadest sense—before it entered on something like its present shape

in the seventeenth century, has been, compared with corresponding Continental practices, singularly free from objectionable taint. We may be more reverent, we may be less imaginative, but we are more moral in our dramatic and comic instincts and behaviour. But when we have said this, we have said all. Our attitude towards the holiest of seasons, ceremonies, and symbols is, from an historic stand-point, commendable only by the light of greater defaulters. Here, again, it is a question whether mental tension and its rebound have not in part caused the too-often unseemly revels of Christmas painted by history. Perhaps the very strain of reverence necessitates a reaction of the intellectual mood, rather than the emotional feeling; perhaps not. At all events, Christmas has been in past times, if not un-Christian, un-Christlike. Göethe placed reverence above all things, and it is the crown of intelligence as well as the chivalry of religion; but too much must not be expected where intelligence has but an attenuated genesis, and 'the white lily of a stainless life' but scanty seed. After all, character is the product of organisation and circumstance, and, where reason cannot admire, charity at least should forgive. Approaching the dawn of Pantomime with these feelings, we see, on Twelfth-day, 1513, a gorgeous pageant at bluff Harry's court, whereof not the least striking fairy-like phenomenon is a golden mountain, with on the top a golden tree. Out of this mountain sprang—not an Horatian ridiculous mouse, but a lady, attended by blooming children of honour. This remarkable achievement was repeated every Christmas for seventy or eighty years. The Eve of St. Nicholas was devoted to the election of a boy-bishop. The festival, according to Strype, was inaugurated with a view to stimulating the choristers, taught in the schools of music, in their studies. However, the same considerations which govern the choice of our modern managers of pantomimic fairyland appear to have directed the fortunes of this juvenile addition to the episcopate. 'The boy-bishop was pretty sure to be the good boy of the school—that is, if he were handsome and well-shaped, qualifications even more essential than merit,' as appears from the register of York Cathedral.

This identity of virtue with beauty is worthy of the enthusiasm of Chaucer and the language of Aristotle. The robes of the youthful ecclesiastic were, as the Northumberland household book testifies, only second in magnificence to those of the diocesan himself. A statute of old St. Paul's furnishes the London boy-bishop with a horse. After being permitted to say mass by the statutes of Winchester College, which stands just now before the public in memorable connection with the brutal use of ash-sticks, and ordered to by those of Eton, the boy-bishop preached on that text of inimitable

loveliness, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me,' went home with a hired train of mountebanks and minstrels, sang songs, indulged in laughter-moving antics with his motley crew, and finally wound up with a feast provided by the churchwardens. Nor were girls forgotten. Archbishop Peckham, writing to the nuns of Goodstowe (1278) enjoins that 'public prayers be no longer said in Church on St. Catherine's day by little girls.' The difference in point of detail between Christmas then and Christmas now is that, whereas we go to Church first and to Pantomime afterwards, our simple forefathers combined the two. The difference in point of principle between the celebration of the Saviour's birth in that age and its welcome in this is, that whereas, let us hope, modern reverence has sensitiveness and discrimination, mediæval twilight was unfavourable to the growth and exercise of such qualities. The statute of Henry III. forbidding clergymen to play with dice at church must be regarded as at once the disgrace and the apology of that simple time. But this at least may be said for it, that whereas Christmas in England has often been the occasion of misplaced mirth, it has never been the cloak for unbridled licentiousness. The Abbot of Unreason was our equivalent for the Continental Bishop of Fools. But the Abbot of Unreason, who was a poetasting knight or gentleman, ornamented by monarch or minister, never presided over worse elements than fun, horse-play, and satire.

These, no doubt, are completely out of tune with the sanctuary. Still they are innocent compared with its libidinous, hypocritical desecration which disgraces the Christian history of other lands. Indeed the worst feature in our own is the unsavoury anathema of the Puritan Stubbs, who betrays a remarkable relish for the evils which his unctuous rhetoric so graphically describes. He gloats over the anointed King, with his twenty, three-score, or a hundred waiters, dressed in liveries of green, white, and yellow, over their scarves, ribbons, laces, golden rings, and precious stones, over the handkerchiefs in their hands and round their necks, the twenty or forty bells round each leg, their hobby-horses and their dragons above all, over their parade to church amidst 'the devil's dance of the thundering drummers.' Perhaps he has personal experience of the fact that the man who ventured to express a serene hope that such an unseemly procession would at his suggestion dissolve instantly was carried on a cow-staff and ducked in a mill stream. In 1440, Captain John Gladman, a man true to God and King, and as unlike Stubbs as he must have been unlike Stiggins, spent a very merry Christmas with his neighbours. He rode on a gaudily-caparisoned horse. After him crept the figure of Lent, clothed in herring-skins, with the most wretched of hacks for his

semblance of a steed, and the most unlovely of oyster-shells for the adornment of his harness. A train of roysterers and mimics, pantomimics, followed, tricked up as unconscious illustrations of unknown Darwinism, as bears, wolves, apes, as armed warriors, and harridans with blackened faces and tattered clothes. Carts brought up the rear, with old fools in appropriate costume, pretending to hatch young fools.

The word 'young' epitomises the place held by children in all the early, as in all recent, Pantomime. Hitherto we have seen English Pantomime as a chrysalis, it now enters the stage as a butterfly. 'Comic masques in the high style of Italy,' were among the fashionable sensations of the patent houses in 1700. The first English Pantomime so-called was put on the boards by Rich, manager of the Lincoln's Inn Fields Company on Boxing-night, 1717, under the title, 'A New Italian Mimic Scene (never performed before) between a Scaramouch, a Harlequin, a Country Farmer, his Wife, and Others.' The prodigal inventiveness of Rich was spurred by his rivalry with Cibber, sole lessee of Drury Lane, and monopolist of the legitimate drama. Far better than Trochu's plan it succeeded. Pantomime was to the legitimate drama then what burlesque is now. Indeed, Pope, in his 'Dunciad' sneers at the insane audiences who can take pleasure in the monstrosities of Pantomime spectacles; and Garrick bitterly complains of 'the burlesque opening;' a traditional arrangement which Dibdin was the last of Pantomime writers to observe. Pantomime actors, on the other hand, were then in much higher repute than now. Garrick wrote of Lun—

With matchless art and whim
He gave the power of speech to every limb;
Though masked and mute, conveyed his quick intent,
And told in frolic gestures all he meant.

Woodward, too, known for his presentations of Lord Foppington, Marplot, and Sir Andrew Aguecheek, was celebrated in the *rôle* of harlequin. Critics have asked whether Grimaldi would own, or Rich recognize, the modern development of the Pantomime, in which the burlesque opening dwarfs and darkens the harlequinade. Without pretending to decide the point, I cannot help feeling that the essential virtue of Pantomime has been preserved, while it has been purged of its errors. It no longer invites boy-bishops gleefully to expound the gracious saying, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.' But in the season of Christmas, and the spirit of true Christianity, it still bids us all be joyous children of a smaller or of a larger growth on earth.

IN SIGHT OF THE CRAB-TREE.

'DOROTHEA JONES, you are my chum,' said Caleb Jenkins to me.

'Am I, Caleb?' said I.

'Yes; and I may kiss you, because you are my chum.'

'May you, Caleb?' said I.

'To be sure I may;' and so he did.

'It's nice to kiss you, Dorothea.'

'Is it Caleb?'

'Dorothea, you won't let brother George kiss you, because he ain't your chum.'

'No, he's not, and I should slap his face.'

'That would be too late; don't let him come near you.'

'I'll scream then.'

'No; keep grand like away from him.'

'But I can't, he's bigger than me, and pinches me, and says he'll give me nuts if I let him kiss me.'

'Oh, you naughty girl, then I won't look at you any more—you are a deceitful bit; go away, go away.'

'Good-bye, Caleb;' and I turned tail and went.

'Dorothea, come back,' he screamed.

'No, I shan't;' I went on, and, presently, being a good way off, I looked round, and saw Caleb, my chum, lying on the ground, kicking his heels, and I thought I heard him sob and scream. But I didn't go back, though I felt inclined to do so; he had called me a deceitful bit—the horrid boy.

It was summer time. I was a little girl of about seven, my chum about the same. We wandered daily down to the water, and looked at the Crab-tree opposite, and swore friendship, and stared at each other, and went away all right and friendly, till Caleb took to quarrel about his brother George.

'Dorothea Jones,' said Mrs. Jenkins, 'have you seen Caleb?'

'No,' I said, unblushingly.

'But you were out with him?'

'But I won't see him nor George either; they are both bad boys.'

'You little minx, then they shan't speak to you again.'

'Very well, ma'am;' and so I walked away.

* * * * *

semblance of a steed, and the most unlovely of oyster-shells for the adornment of his harness. A train of roysterers and mimics, pantomimics, followed, tricked up as unconscious illustrations of unknown Darwinism, as bears, wolves, apes, as armed warriors, and harridans with blackened faces and tattered clothes. Carts brought up the rear, with old fools in appropriate costume, pretending to hatch young fools.

The word 'young' epitomises the place held by children in all the early, as in all recent, Pantomime. Hitherto we have seen English Pantomime as a chrysalis, it now enters the stage as a butterfly. 'Comic masques in the high style of Italy,' were among the fashionable sensations of the patent houses in 1700. The first English Pantomime so-called was put on the boards by Rich, manager of the Lincoln's Inn Fields Company on Boxing-night, 1717, under the title, 'A New Italian Mimic Scene (never performed before) between a Scaramouch, a Harlequin, a Country Farmer, his Wife, and Others.' The prodigal inventiveness of Rich was spurred by his rivalry with Cibber, sole lessee of Drury Lane, and monopolist of the legitimate drama. Far better than Trochu's plan it succeeded. Pantomime was to the legitimate drama then what burlesque is now. Indeed, Pope, in his 'Dunciad' sneers at the insane audiences who can take pleasure in the monstrosities of Pantomime spectacles; and Garrick bitterly complains of 'the burlesque opening;' a traditional arrangement which Dibdin was the last of Pantomime writers to observe. Pantomime actors, on the other hand, were then in much higher repute than now. Garrick wrote of Lun—

With matchless art and whim
He gave the power of speech to every limb;
Though masked and mute, conveyed his quick intent,
And told in frolic gestures all he meant.

Woodward, too, known for his presentations of Lord Foppington, Marplot, and Sir Andrew Aguecheek, was celebrated in the rôle of harlequin. Critics have asked whether Grimaldi would own, or Rich recognize, the modern development of the Pantomime, in which the burlesque opening dwarfs and darkens the harlequinade. Without pretending to decide the point, I cannot help feeling that the essential virtue of Pantomime has been preserved, while it has been purged of its errors. It no longer invites boy-bishops gleefully to expound the gracious saying, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.' But in the season of Christmas, and the spirit of true Christianity, it still bids us all be joyous children of a smaller or of a larger growth on earth.

IN SIGHT OF THE CRAB-TREE.

'DOROTHEA JONES, you are my chum,' said Caleb Jenkins to me.

'Am I, Caleb?' said I.

'Yes; and I may kiss you, because you are my chum.'

'May you, Caleb?' said I.

'To be sure I may;' and so he did.

'It's nice to kiss you, Dorothea.'

'Is it Caleb?'

'Dorothea, you won't let brother George kiss you, because he ain't your chum.'

'No, he's not, and I should slap his face.'

'That would be too late; don't let him come near you.'

'I'll scream then.'

'No; keep grand like away from him.'

'But I can't, he's bigger than me, and pinches me, and says he'll give me nuts if I let him kiss me.'

'Oh, you naughty girl, then I won't look at you any more—you are a deceitful bit; go away, go away.'

'Good-bye, Caleb;' and I turned tail and went.

'Dorothea, come back,' he screamed.

'No, I shan't;' I went on, and, presently, being a good way off, I looked round, and saw Caleb, my chum, lying on the ground, kicking his heels, and I thought I heard him sob and scream. But I didn't go back, though I felt inclined to do so; he had called me a deceitful bit—the horrid boy.

It was summer time. I was a little girl of about seven, my chum about the same. We wandered daily down to the water, and looked at the Crab-tree opposite, and swore friendship, and stared at each other, and went away all right and friendly, till Caleb took to quarrel about his brother George.

'Dorothea Jones,' said Mrs. Jenkins, 'have you seen Caleb?'

'No,' I said, unblushingly.

'But you were out with him?'

'But I won't see him nor George either; they are both bad boys.'

'You little minx, then they shan't speak to you again.'

'Very well, ma'am;' and so I walked away.

'Dorothea Jones, I have been thrashed for you,' said Caleb next day.

'Have you? I'm glad of it.'

'Are you? You bad girl.'

'Yes, I am, and now you know it;' so I walked away.

* * * * *

'Dorothea Jones, I'm going to be sent to school in London,' said Caleb a week later.

'I am glad of it;' so I walked away.

'Dorothea Jones, brother Caleb has been sent to school to London, to be a gentleman one day. Uncle has took him; now you're my chum.'

'I'm no such thing; here's a slap in your face; now then, no nuts to-day.' So I went away, down to the water, and sat down in sight of the Crab-tree, where we had kissed a week ago. The place seemed horrid, and I cried; Caleb had gone without seeing me, and I knew now he was a brute of a boy.

It got to autumn and grew cold, and I came every day and looked at the Crab-tree, and saw the boats and the jolly boys.

It got to winter, and I came still every day in the snow and the rain and the wind, and I sat in the sight of the Crab-tree; and when I came home I was scolded by sister, who was mistress, for I had no mother; but I didn't mind.

It was Christmas day, and the snow deep on the ground, and they were all happy and cosy by the fire, but I went down and sat in the sight of the Crab-tree, and cried, for I thought only of my chum.

* * * * *

I went to school, and every day after school I came and looked at the Crab-tree, for I must never forget that my chum was a horrid brute of a boy.

I heard my chum Caleb was getting on at lessons, and I came every day to the water, and learned mine over and over again in sight of the Crab-tree.

The mistress said, 'Dorothea Jones, you are the best scholar in the school;' and I laughed to myself, because I knew the sight of the Crab-tree had done it.

The clergyman said, 'Dorothea Jones must be made a pupil-teacher, because she's the best scholar in the school;' and I laughed, because I knew the sight of the Crab-tree did it.

I never played and never ran and never dawdled, but I learnt and learnt and learnt; for wasn't my chum getting on at school, and must not I?

'Dorothea Jones,' said George, when the summer came round, 'they

say they are proud of you, you'll be a teacher once ; come now and be my chum.'

But I walked away grand like, as Caleb had said.

And I never heard about Caleb any more, for I wouldn't speak to his mother and I wouldn't speak to his brother, and every day I sat in sight of the Crab-tree down by the water-side.

And winter came, and summer came again and again for five years, and I was a big girl, and I had never once missed going to the water and learn my lesson in sight of the Crab-tree. Caleb, my chum, had gone to America, I heard, to be made a rich boy there by his uncle, but I knew that he was a brute of a boy. And I heard he was clever and learned, and I meant to be clever and learned too, for was I not Caleb's chum ?

And I kept well always, for I was afraid to get ill lest I might not be able to go in sight of the Crab-tree, and day after day I went and became a good scholar at last.

And the clergyman's lady came and fetched me one day to drink tea with her daughters, and so I did ; and she was pleased when I read and recited poetry and answered her questions ; then she said : 'Dorothea Jones, will you live with us ? and I will make you a lady.'

And I said 'Yes, ma'am, if I may go to the water every day, and learn my lessons.'

'Why, my child ?' said she.

'Because my chum, Caleb Jenkins, expects me to be there every day.'

And they laughed, but though I did not like it I did not mind, because I wanted to be a lady. And they dressed me nicely and brushed my hair, and taught me music, and drawing, and French, and German, and all the other things girls ought to know. And in time I grew up, and learned every day my lesson in sight of the Crab-tree, never missing, never, never.

George met me once, and said Caleb had written but hadn't said a word about me, and I slapped his face—big girl as I was—because he wanted to kiss me, for he said I looked as sweet as the pea in his mother's back-garden. He should wait and marry me, for if I did mean to be a lady, he was richer than I was, and Caleb had forgotten me long ago. Then I cried when he was gone, because I knew that Caleb was a big brute of a boy.

And I improved wonderfully they said, and should be a great woman one day ; but they all wondered that I said so little and remained so simple in my thoughts ; and I laughed to myself because I knew I could think of nothing but sitting in the sight of the Crab-tree every day, and learning my lessons for my chum.

Winter came and summer came, and I was now seventeen; a tall young lady, as they said, and a very nice one. I taught the clergyman's little children in the nursery and went out with the big young ladies, and I was treated kindly by everyone, but I would stop away for nobody and nothing from the sight of the Crab-tree, and day after day I went and read my book; and when the day came that my chum Caleb had been gone ten years I went down again, and I knew that I had been there 3650 times, with the leap-year's days over. Now there came a big stop about something, and the first part of my story is done.

* * * * *

I believe I was beautiful, as men call it, and people whispered sometimes when they looked at me; I heard the word 'strange;' then I laughed to myself, for I knew they could not understand my thoughts and my mind, and I did not care as long as I could go in sight of the Crab-tree every day—winter and summer, spring and autumn, rain and sunshine, cold and heat, thinking of my chum, who I knew was a horrid big boy.

One day I had gone down; it was summer time and very fine; and caring little for people I began to love the creatures that fly and crawl and creep, and are the little things, as we think, in the world; but I began to think they made a big link in it, and we had better know more about them than about other foolish things; I fetched beetles and worms and insects together, and made a colony of them, and talked to them, and I knew they expected me every day and were my real friends.

About this time, too, I began to long for a friend to speak to in my way. I wonder why girls at seventeen, and eighteen, and nineteen want a friend? but they do. The insects were my friends; but more and more I began to think that if my chum Caleb now came back, I should not turn away. Yet was I frightened when I thought of it; I wished, and I didn't wish, to see him, till the hot tears would roll down my cheeks, and the insects danced before me to please me, knowing that I was miserable.

One day I sat so, and some one came by my side.

'Eh, Miss Dorothea Jones!' said George Jenkins, now a tall young man; 'I have come on purpose to know if you will marry me. I have been faithful to you for all your strange ways. I have won the old lawsuit in Chancery for mother, and we have got four hundred a-year, and tho' mother grumbles, I mean to have you, and no one else. I shall take a pretty cottage and a nice garden, and live like a gentleman, and do a little business for another couple of hundred, and you'll be a real lady, poor as you are.'

'I needn't answer you,' said I; 'for I don't mean to have you.'

'That is nonsense—for no one else will take you. They think that you are strange, but I know better what it is, and I'll break it.'

So he sat himself down by me, and he put his arm round me, and wanted to kiss me there and then. I meant to rush away, but he was too strong; then I looked at the Crab-tree, and I thought of my chum Caleb; and I wished he were there. Something like a shadow fell before me, and on a sudden George was driven from me like by a blow, and he screamed out—

'What have you done to me, have you the evil spirit in you? Look, I have had a blow as by a man.' He stood off and touched me not again, and I moved away, without saying a word, for I felt very uncomfortable. The insects were all running about as if to protect me.

'You'll be glad to have me one day, Miss Upstart,' he called after me; 'and I'll kill any one else, who'll ever touch you. I have watched eleven years, and I'll not give up now.'

So had I watched eleven years in sight of the Crab-tree, and I didn't mean to give up.

I went the next day and the next day, but George came not again; there came, however, another trouble. The clergyman's son came from Oxford, and he was a dashing fellow, and wanted to make love to me. I merely looked at him in my own way, and passed on, but that was no use, and when he had watched me a day or two he came after me in sight of the Crab-tree, and began to talk all kinds of nonsense about divinities, Hebes, Venuses, and Dianas. I didn't answer; it was all the same to me; my colony of insects were dearer to me. At last, he thought I agreed to it all, because I didn't answer, and he tried also to be bold, supposing me a simple girl, and placed his hand on my arm. But I looked at the Crab-tree, and wished my chum Caleb were there, and see on a sudden the Oxford dashing fellow started away from me, as if he had had a blow, and I was frightened myself.'

'What is that,' Miss Jenkins, he said; 'what tricks are these? You gave me a blow with something.'

'I shouldn't take the trouble,' I said: rose, and went away. As I walked on, I saw George, who had been hidden, run up to the young man. The two had words; there was a scuffle, and I rushed off to send some one down. There was a great noise about it, for George had given the other a wound on the head with his stick. They said I was making mischief among the young men with my strange ways, and I must be watched and locked up. Again and again I escaped and ran down, but they caught me and brought me back and at last meant to lock me up, I believe, in a madhouse. All I wanted was a look at the Crab-tree, a talk to my insects, and a thought of Caleb my chum.

Winter came, and they well nigh tortured me to death; the good clergyman had sent his son away again, and wanted to drive the evil spirit out of me. He prayed with me and read the Bible to me, while I could not get quiet, if they would not let me have a sight of the Crab-tree. It was Christmas-day; they said I had been violent, and for weeks I had not been allowed to go out. They locked me up, and I believe I screamed, for it drew me to the water with strong hands, and I did not know what to do; I could not withstand the power in me. I could not eat, I could not drink—I was getting very ill, my head was getting confused and hot, and I felt I must die soon. The maid who was to watch me ran down at night to have a chat with the servants in the kitchen: she believed I was asleep, so she left the door open. I jumped up in an instant, wrapped a big plaid shawl round me, and ran down with naked feet to the water's edge. I trembled, some one was sitting there—some one whom I could see in the dark, he appeared luminous to me. I started, but I rushed on and touched him: I, who never went near *any* man. He turned, he saw me, 'Good God!' he cried, 'is that my chum, my Dorothea? is she mad?' He hesitated, but then he sprang up. 'No, no, poor child, she has only been waiting for me;' and he took me in his strong arms and meant to carry me away. I could not speak, but as he touched me a shadow came near us, and George cried out, 'Never, never, you never have her. You went away, and I have watched her eleven years; I'll have her alive or dead.'

They struggled, and I fell in a swoon on the cold snow-covered ground. Then I just knew that footsteps came near; that people took me up and carried me fainting away.

* * * * *

They said I raved for weeks, and wanted to get to the Crab-tree. When I remember again, I was upon the sofa, and near me stood the good clergyman and his family. They said the wildness had gone from my eyes, and the strangeness from my manner, and they called it a case of true and early attachment. Caleb Jenkins had come home soon as he was independent—young as he was—and had not asked where I was, but had gone straight in sight of the Crab-tree, he said I must come there, for his spirit had hovered about it every day, and he had always known when I was there. He had wished to see me just as I sprang from the bed. He had been allowed to see me once when they thought I should not live. George had gone; he had nearly killed his brother, but money bought him off, and he had come to America instead of the other, to inherit his uncle's wealth, even then his brother for robbing him of me. I am sorry to say my head and health were so weak for months that I never saw Caleb

e good
he evil
, while
of the
nt, and
up, and
hands
ower in
ill, re
n. The
with the
the door
l round
sembled
he dark
touched
saw me
he mad
l, she h
arms an
ched me
ver, you
er elev

w-cove
people to

*
Crab-
e stood
d gone
called
ne home
d not
Crab-
out it
l wished
d to see
one; he
he had
alth, co
ry to sp
w Cal



DRAWN BY J. TEMPLE.



ENGRAVED BY C. M. JENKIN.

'IN SIGHT OF THE CRAB-TREE.'

he s
in s
day
It
wha
they
thou
neve
have

It
recit
vent
roun
now,

TH
to h
want
They
woul
day
child
him;
clerg
word
of the

Th
and s
face
from
thoug

'De
tacitu
'O
tied,
friend
our p
and t

You
for th

he sent me the little picture I have enclosed, as we both stood in infancy in sight of the Crab-tree, that I might know where he would be every day till I could come myself.

It is such a simple story; but for a long time have I been thinking what a fuss people make when they write a story; what fine words they use and grand sentiments; and yet how simple 'real life' is, though so precious. Pardon me if I could not use long words—I never could; I wonder if my tongue will ever become loosened? I have written this on the couch with the little picture before me.

* * * * *

It is again Christmas time and I must add a few words to my quaint recital; then I'll send it to some daring editor, and I'll see if he'll venture to take a plain statement without rhetoric, ornament, and round-about phraseology; but I feel my own pen begins to run away now, for my tongue has become loosened at last.

The doctor had forbidden me to see my chum Caleb, or even write to him, for one twelvemonth; he said it was for our good, as he wanted to prove my sanity, for half-insane women should not marry. They said I had been so docile and good that at last the clergyman would himself lead me down to the water to meet on such a joyous day my chum—for I never can call him anything else than that childish word. We went; I was quite still. In the distance I saw him; he came a little towards me; we approached him; then the clergyman placed our hands together and said a few kind and holy words. He went, and Caleb's arms were round me there in the sight of the Crab-tree, under God's own blue sky.

There came no shock this time to separate us, but, as he kissed me and said, 'Will you now come back?' and as I nodded and hid my face on his shoulder, my tongue loosened. I knew the stiffness went from my words, and I might write as fine as anybody. A thousand thoughts crowded upon me, and Caleb said—

'Dearest Dorothea, they have said I must not mind your being taciturn and strange; for me you speak with angels' tongues.'

'Oh, my chum Caleb,' said I; 'twelve years has my tongue been tied, and now I could sing for ever—here next to you, my own old friend. From early childhood upwards have we proved our faith—our plighted troth; plighted unknowingly, firmly, through distance and time, in sight of the Crab-tree.'

* * * * *

Young ladies, when you have found your real chum, remain faithful, for there is something in mutual attraction!

INCIDENTS AT MADRAS.

BY LIEUTENANT J. A. CHALLICE, R.N.

JULY 186—. Her Majesty's Ship *S—r*, of which I was Lieutenant, anchored at Madras, where we were gratified to meet with a cordial reception from the Europeans there residing.

What amused us principally was a sight of the 'Commodore of the Catamaran Fleet,' and the performance of a party of native jugglers on board our vessel. A catamaran is a craft composed of three, sometimes of four, rough logs, simply lashed together. The native occupant sits therein quite naked, and paddles himself through a surf in which no boat could live, emerging therefrom none the worse for a ducking enough to drown an unseasoned European. A story is extant that some years back the present 'Commodore' saved the life of the naval commander-in-chief, and that that officer, in token of his gratitude, gave him a commission as 'Commodore of the Catamaran Fleet.' It is certain that this fellow possesses two or three faded commissions, but they have very much the appearance of lieutenants' commissions, with the names scratched out, and the dates altered to suit the occasion. A large catamaran, paddled by two men, and steered by a third, rapidly approaches the ship. At one end are seated a dark, sensual-looking individual, and a boy, naked to his waist, and carrying a large tin box; the man, however, wears a cocked hat, and a fanciful resemblance can be traced in his coat to that of a post-captain in the navy, while at his side dangles a side-arm, the use of which appears rather ambiguous. Strutting proudly across our quarter-deck, he takes his stand by the wheel, evidently gratified by the attentions we have humoured him with—piping the side, touching our caps, &c., as if to a *bonâ fide* post-captain. He accepts our invitation to go down below with eagerness, and, followed by his 'secretary,' enters the ward-room, where he soon covers the table with his numerous certificates, a great many of which are from the Mercantile Marine. Here is a specimen.

[*Such a date.*]

'This day we have been highly honoured by a visit from His Highness, the Chief of the Catamarans, who drank a glass or two of wine, and departed, taking with him the following small donations, to aid to keep up his fleet: Master 5r., Mate 2r., Ch. Carpenter 2r., crew $4\frac{1}{2}$ r.; Total $13\frac{1}{2}$ r.'

We made up a subscription, to which I contributed a trifle, though I really believe, since he is Commander-in-Chief and Treasurer at the same time, that a great portion goes towards maintaining the rotundity of person which he possesses. Among the various donations he has received from the crews of many vessels of war and mercantile marine, not a few have been owing to his secretary's nakedness. Our doctor gave him an old frock-coat, but I would lay my head on it that the very next ship he enters will find his secretary's back as bare as when he entered ours. Shortly after receiving our contributions, amounting in all to 21s., he took his departure, evidently in a high state of enjoyment from the enormous amount of beer he had placed under his seedy uniform. Some Hindoo jugglers now came aft, and requested permission from the captain to exhibit some of their really wonderful feats. Having obtained it, they sat down, four in number, and commenced by causing a black boy on board to sit down on the deck. One of their number then taking a piece of chalk drew a white line right down his forehead, all the time reciting a chant, in which the other three joined in, the burden of it being chick-war, ar-ar-chick-chick, &c., repeated very quickly; he then, without removing his hand, drew a purple, then a blue, then a red, and, lastly, a black line, and finally showed us the original piece of white chalk in his hand, reduced in size certainly, but uncontaminated by the numerous colours that adorned the boy's face. They next did the Ball trick. Four little balls are produced, and three bell-shaped cups of metal, the size of a small coffee-cup. These three cups they deposit on the deck, mouth downwards, and then lift them all up, showing there is nothing underneath. Tapping the tops of the cups with his wand, the performer tosses the four balls about from hand to hand, then suddenly exposes his palms; lo, the balls are gone! He again lifts the cups. Two are empty, one has all four balls underneath. Replacing the cups, the four balls still remaining under the same cup, he twists his wand about, touches their tops, lifts them, and two of them have one ball each under them, and the remaining one has two. It is impossible to detect the secret of this trick, which is varied in innumerable ways. The jugglers then did the sword-trick. A sword, about two feet long in the blade, was thrust down the open throat of one of them

and must have reached to his navel. He stood for some minutes with the blade down his stomach, and the thick hilt sticking out from his mouth; he then slowly withdrew it, and, having wiped the blade, performed several sleight-of-hand tricks with the weapon. The same man then took an iron rod bent like an S, with one end fashioned into the likeness of a snake's head. Opening his mouth, he put this up one of his nostrils, so that we saw the iron head at the back of his throat; it was twisted about several times before it was withdrawn. The fire-eater then started up. He put a piece of light-coloured stone between his teeth, and took several strong inspirations, whereupon smoke and flames presently darted from his mouth and nostrils. This also lasted upwards of a minute, after which he took a piece of wadding and set it afire from the flame coming out of his mouth. After this, one of their number procured a bit of thread, and allowed us to cut it up into small pieces. He then swallowed it in a minute and drew it out again perfect as before it was cut. The same man drew out after the thread an immense long worm about six feet in length.

Another of their number amused us with playing with six balls, spinning at the same time a top, and balancing it perfectly with its apex revolving round the extremity of a long rod resting on his forehead. The Heavy Weight trick was next performed. It is hardly fair to call this a trick, since the dull thud an iron ball of 20lbs. makes on the back of the performer is not to be mistaken, as he catches it alternately on the muscles of his arm, and on the small of his back. The two tricks of the day were yet to come. Neither of them, I think, has been satisfactorily explained. The first performed was the snake-trick. The man shows you an empty basket, and then the dried skins of two cobra capellas stuck together, and lets you examine closely both them and the basket. Placing the skins in the basket he plays plaintively for about five minutes on a sort of flute called the Charmer. The lid is then lifted, and the two skins are seen filled out, the heads darting hither and thither, and the bodies still writhing in each other's embrace. The circle around the basket is immediately enlarged. The snake-charmer squeezes some of the poison out of the mouth of one on to his arm, and shows it to us. The flute is again played and, the snakes, obedient to its voice, returned into the basket. When the lid is once more taken off nothing is to be seen but the two dried skins. The snakes could not, however well-educated, have disappeared without our seeing them, and none of us can explain it without attributing supernatural powers to the Hindoos. The last trick, which was just as wonderful, was now performed. Asking us for some water and sand, the performer, when he has received them, arranges the latter into a mould and places in it the common bulb of a mangrove. This

he covers with a cloth and continues to sprinkle water over the covering. At last he asks one of our officers how high he would like the plant to grow. He says about 2ft. 6in. One of the jugglers then plays the flute, and we see the plant visibly raising the cloth. Five minutes elapse; the cloth is removed, and lo! there is a vigorous young mangrove, with bright green leaves, that still retain some of the water so liberally sprinkled over it! Comment is hardly necessary. They could not have carried this bulky plant aft without its being noticed, much less have introduced it under the cloth. Moreover the cloth was slightly raised to let us have a view of it at different stages of its growth, so that to explain the phenomena by common rule of thumb the jugglers must have brought on board several plants of all sizes. I suppose I must not believe the assertion of a blue-jacket who had been standing behind the performer, and who swore that he actually saw the mangrove growing. After making up a contribution for these truly clever jugglers or 'snake-charmers,' we parted with them, mutually gratified. They are all in league with each other, and such is their *esprit de corps* that I believe they would not sell their tricks, especially the two last, for 1000 rupees (£100).

THE THEATRES.

CHARING CROSS.

THIS establishment, having been entirely redecorated, was opened in the early part of November, under the management of Mr. John S. Clarke, who had for some time previous been acquiring a considerable reputation for light comedy at the Strand Theatre. 'The Rivals' was the play chosen for representation; and, backed as it was by a strong cast, the performance resulted in a well-earned success. It has always been to us a matter of considerable astonishment how such a play as 'The Rivals' ever gained any hold upon the public, seeing that it 'satisfies no one principle of true dramatic art, has an utterly incomprehensible plot, and has always, whenever performed, moved rather by the innate strength of the acting than by its own coherence and vigour. When we add to this that the comedy is weighted with a sub-plot that is not only unnecessary, but absolutely devoid of even commonplace interest, one seems disposed to question the taste that has made a stock-piece of a play that, if we err not, was hissed off the boards on its first appearance.

The reappearance of Mrs. Stirling in the character of Mrs. Malaprop, is matter for general congratulation; so artistic and finished a performance is rarely seen in our days, and to show that it was thoroughly appreciated by the audience that had assembled on the opening night, it will be sufficient for us to state that Mrs. Stirling received on ovation which she will not readily forget, and which should convince her that though the public has many favourites, she may be classed among those few whom it not only admires but respects. Each mistake came from her lips, as it were, unconsciously, and not the slightest gesture betrayed that the speaker was aware of the havoc she was making with her native tongue. From first to last Mrs. Stirling entirely commanded the attention of the house; and in the scene where she makes Captain Absolute read to her the famous letter in which he, under another name, had alluded to her as that

'she-dragon,' she roused her audience to the highest state of enthusiasm. At the close of the performance, she must have known that she had presented a creation which amply entitled her to re-assume her undisputed position as 'Queen of English Comedy.'

Mr. Walter Lacy had been cast in the part of Sir Anthony Absolute, and although he is far too accomplished an actor to assume any character without doing every credit to it, still we are not of opinion that he was well suited. To Mr. Charles Harcourt, who played Captain Absolute, we would wish to offer our sincere congratulations for his able and gentlemanly performance, and we are constrained to add that it is with very considerable astonishment that we remarked the poor justice that was done him by the majority of the press. Miss Brennan always is delightful, and if she could only get over a slight disposition to mannerism would play Lydia Languish to perfection; however, she was most deservedly applauded, and fully shared the honours of the evening. Mr. Wilmot deserves a word of praise, although a little toning down would improve him. The Bob Acres of Mr. John S. Clarke was a surprise to most of those who associated that character with the traditionary method of rendering it. We do not think it is the best part that Mr. Clarke could have chosen, but no one can help appreciating his thoroughly original conception. Taken as a whole, therefore, this performance of the 'Rivals' must be pronounced to be an emphatic success, and one fully entitling the manager to unhesitating public support.

THE GLOBE.

To say that Mr. Frank Marshall's 'False Shame' is full of faults is to speak nothing but the truth; but at the same time such a statement would convey a most inadequate idea of the real merit of the piece, which deserves to take high rank among the latest dramatic productions, and does certainly entitle the author to much more than ordinary praise. Mr. Marshall has been fortunate enough to get his piece produced by so able and energetic a manager as Mr. Montague, and, consequently, all the parts being well and judiciously cast, and great care having been taken with the representation, a most satisfactory and thoroughly deserved result is achieved. In the limited space at our disposal this month it is impossible for us to give even a sketch of the plot, nor can we make further allusion to the acting than to compliment Miss Larkin, Miss Massey, Miss Addison, Mr. Billington, and Mr. Montague. There is, however, a characteristic of this theatre to which we would particularly wish to draw attention. Ever since it opened under the management of Mr. Montague nothing but a pure

and noble form of dramatic entertainment has found a home there, while the artistic taste with which each piece in succession has been produced has deservedly entitled it to public favour. In any just criticism of the various London managers Mr. Montague would deserve to be included among the few who, true to their art and calling, have used every effort to raise the stage, to give fair play to new authors, and to offer the public healthful recreation.

THE STRAND.

To all dismally-conditioned persons, whether troubled by ills of mind or body, the Strand Theatre at the present moment offers peculiar consolation. In addition to light farce and homely comedy, the management have just produced a burlesque upon Mr. Halliday's version of 'The Lady of the Lake.' Anything more indescribably funny has seldom been seen on the stage, and it is no exaggeration to say that the audience are kept in a roar of laughter from the rise to the fall of the curtain. Mr. Byron, the author, has never been more happy in his wit than in this his last effusion, which is all the more worthy of praise because, written in the true spirit of comedy, its sarcasm and humour are perfectly harmless.

THE OPERA COMIQUE.

WE think that Mr. E. P. Hingston will improve upon the entertainment which is being at present given at this theatre; but, nevertheless, we are bound to admit that, by the aid of a sparkling libretto, bright dresses, and cheering music, the burlesque, 'L'Œil Crevé,' goes smoothly, and gives evident satisfaction to the audiences that nightly crowd the house.





DRAWN BY D. H. FRISTON.

ENGRAVED BY C. M. JENKIN.

'GUSTAVUS III.'

French
discon
then a
'Ma
The
repea
'Tu
No a
to her
sternly
'Ce
'Nor
'Et